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Work and conflict; or, The
divine life in its progress

Book, No.

WORK AND CONFLICT,

OR

THE DIVINE LIFE IN ITS PROGRESS.

A BOOK OF FACTS AND HISTORIES.

BY THE
REV. JOHN KENNEDY, M. A.,
F.R.G.S.

REVISED BY THE EDITOR OF THE BOARD.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

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PREFACE.

"THE grace of God in the heart of man is a tender plant in a strange, unkindly soil, and, therefore, cannot well prosper and grow without much care and pains, and that of a skilful hand." These are the opening words of Archbishop Leighton's "Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter;" and the principle which they contain lies at the foundation of much that we have to say of the Christian's "Work and Conflict." In a former volume we treated of "The Divine Life," with reference, especially, to its nature, and to the manner and means of its origination in the human soul. But the divine life once originated, what of its progress and permanence? Are these to be left to a sort of spiritual chance, untended and uncared for? Are they secured by the spontaneous energy of the inward life itself? Or are they to be the objects of deliberate painstaking and culture? With Archbishop Leighton our belief is, that inward religion "cannot well prosper and grow without much care and pains." His great Master and ours and the

chiefest servants of the Master have all taught the same lesson: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure:" "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue." The new birth may be a sudden work; the quickening of the soul into spiritual life may be instantaneous; but its onward course, from the weakness of infancy to the strength of manhood, is effected by slow degrees, through many an effort and many a struggle. And God is not pleased to supersede the necessity of effort and struggle, by enabling us to leap at a bound out of our swaddling clothes, and gird ourselves with the attributes of perfect men in Christ Jesus. The usual method of divine grace is, by a gradual process, to discipline and educate the heart out of its weaknesses and errors.

But there must be the "skilful hand" as well as "care and pains" in the culture of the divine life. True religion in the heart of man may be "a tender plant in a strange unkindly soil," but it must not be treated like an exotic, and sheltered in a hot-house to protect it from unkindly blasts. Let it acquire a hardier character, and learn to encounter the most hostile influences. Confined to the closet or the cloister, it can never be other than sickly: it will find health and vigour in an out-of-door existence, amidst the common pursuits and duties of human life. The holy Samuel Rutherford has given us the counterpart of Leighton's saying:—"Grace is a strange plant, it grows

best on the weather-side of the hill." This is a first principle in the "skilful" cultivation of this tender plant, and it is one of many which it is our endeavour in the following pages to elicit from the teachings of Holy Scripture, and to illustrate and enforce by the example of holy men.

In religion all things are possible through the divine help. And with that help so freely promised, so faithfully rendered, the Christian should be like the tree which is "planted by the rivers of water," "not stinted and dwarfish; not smitten with rust and eaten with the worm, but sound alike in the body, the blossom, and the fruit; not crooked, knotted, and unsymmetrical, but free, expansive, and proportional." Wherever he goes, the world should be able to recognize his character without the requisite of a formal proclamation. The image of Christ should be so impressed upon his whole life, as to render him an "epistle, known and read of all men." It has been said, that two-thirds of the really good earnest people we meet, travel along the high road of duty, like horses badly broken in; they advance, but they are always making little efforts to wander to the right hand or to the left, and so requiring the whip and bridle. But the commands and promises of the gospel would lead us to anticipate far other results. There is ample provision made in the motives with which the cross of Christ inspires true believers, and in the grace which the mediation of Christ brings within their reach, to enable them to

become "partakers of the divine nature," and to "walk in the Spirit." Redeemed as they are by the blood of the Lord Jesus is it too much to expect of them that they will aim after that high and spiritual condition in which, to use the words of John Howe, "the soul shall have no other notion of itself than of an everlasting sacrifice, always ascending to God in its own flames?"

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INTRODUCTION.

CHRIST THE PERFECT MAN—THE CHRISTIAN'S EXEMPLAR.

When we stand on the margin of an unruffled lake, the beauties which surround us are reflected from its placid bosom, as from a polished mirror. The green sward, the fairy flower, the majestic tree, the rock and the mountain, the sun and the golden beams which illumine heaven, are all thrown back on us smilingly. And as we gaze into the waters we see in their depths a world brighter and more beautiful than the real world around us—

> "As if there lay beneath the wave,
> Secure from trouble, toil, and care,
> A world than earthly world more fair."

Such was human nature, when, as formed by the divine hand and inspired by the divine breath, it reflected, purely and unbrokenly, all the excellences and beauties of the divine image. But while looking on the smooth surface of the lake, a storm arises, the waters are troubled, and wave lashes wave in its fury. Where is now the liquid landscape, the reflection of all the glory and beauty and majesty of the scene around? We gaze, but it is not. Not one fragment of it remains. The agitated bosom of the waters knows nothing of

what it had but an hour before exhibited so truly and brightly. Such is human nature when subjected to the disturbing and deranging forces of sin. It is no longer a reflection of the beauty and glory of the divine image. We still stand on the margin of the lake. An unseen power allays the storm. The winds cease, but there is not a perfect calm. The waves subside, but the waters are partially ruffled. And as we gaze we observe the landscape again forming itself on the surface. But not as before. It is now thrown back upon us in fragments. Trees and rocks are incongruously mixed. One object is brightly reflected by the surface of the ripple which is now passing before us, and another by the surface of the next. But they do not appear in their natural relation, and more than half their beauty is thereby lost. We see every thing in parts and pieces, nothing in all its beauty; and many things so confusedly, that we can scarcely recognize them. Such is human nature under the operation of the gospel. The disturbing force of sin has been subdued; and the image of God is again reflected from living man. But, alas! it is commonly in most fragmentary forms. Disjointed and broken pieces, rather than a uniform and consistent whole, attest the restoration of the image of God to the soul of man.

Once, however, in the world's history, but only once, there appeared a perfect Man. And it is instructive to know that he lived not in the peaceful solitude of deserts, but in daily conflict, for three-and-thirty years, with the wants, and sins, and sorrows of an evil world. He was "brought into relation with every class and character, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, soldier and priest, lawyer and rabbi, prince

and peasant, Pharisee and Sadducee, the devotee of the temple, the student of the schools, and the money-changer of the market-place." And, contemplated in all these relations, "the universal consent is that *there* is ONE who is absolutely superior to circumstances—ONE on whose serene and lofty spirit the changes that affect sublunary interests can produce no permanent or injurious impressions—ONE for whom his friends never had to make an apology, for whom the impartial critic needs not to demand any forbearance, in whom the keenest sighted of his enemies can find no fault—ONE whom no transient weakness from within, no cunning temptation from without, could divert for a single moment from his onward career of virtue, beneficence, and purity—ONE, in short, who, tried by the loftiest standards of spiritual excellence, must be pronounced, in the language of a disciple who had seen as much of him as any man whilst he was on earth, 'without blemish and without spot.'"*

Not only was it the impression of others that Jesus of Nazareth was sinless, but it was his own consciousness as well. He cannot be suspected of self-ignorance, for his knowledge was boundless; or of pride, for lowliness was one of the most marked traits in his character; yet he never confessed sin. "He never once reproached himself, or regretted any thing he had ever done or said. He never uttered a word to indicate that he had ever taken a wrong step, or neglected a single opportunity; or that any thing conld have been done or said more or better than had been done or said. He was always calmly, perfectly conscious of faultlessness. 'I do always those things which please the Father.'" All other good men have been forward to confess

* Henry Rogers: "Defence of the Eclipse of Faith."

themselves sinners; and nothing gives us so deep a conviction of their true godliness as the ingenuous and hearty acknowledgement of sin. In the case of David, for example, there is nothing he ever did or wrote that satisfies us that the root of true holiness was in him so much as the fifty-first Psalm. This beautiful ode, written on occasion of his repentance of the greatest sins of his life, breathes not the spirit of a criminal trembling at the thought of coming judgment, but of a true penitent mourning ingenuously that he has offended his God and Father. If we find in it a cry of agony for the remission of guilt, we find in it a still more piercing cry for the grace that should sanctify. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." And we rise from the perusal of these confessions and prayers with the impression that only a man of God could cherish such sentiments and utter such cries. We expect the same sentiments to enter substantially into the experience of every man of God; while nothing would shake our confidence in a man's piety so conclusively as his disavowal of all feelings akin to those that are expressed in the fifty-first Psalm. And yet Jesus Christ was a stranger to them. More devout than any other man, more humble than any other man, he was still unconscious of sin. And the fact can be accounted for only on the supposition that he *was* SINLESS.

Jesus Christ was thus "without blemish." But he was more. He was "perfect and entire, *wanting nothing*." The completeness of his character is as remarkable as its faultlessness. The excellences of other good men usually put forth their strength in one direction, and are condensed, so to speak, in one grace or virtue; as if the life and vital

energy of a tree were to flow into one branch, giving it much strength and beauty, but leaving other branches in a state of comparative feebleness. The faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, the zeal of Elijah, are examples. Not that these graces stood alone; for all true excellence springs from one root; and where this root exists it will produce many branches and many fruits of true goodness. But still human nature in its best state, that is, regenerated by the grace of God, ordinarily puts forth its greatest strength in some one or two directions. The character of Jesus Christ stands out in marked contrast to this partial and incomplete development of the good in man. "It is not the presence of one or two great qualities in his character that commands our reverence; it is the extraordinary combination of excellences which it displays that constitutes its peculiar attraction. Meekness and majesty—firmness and gentleness—zeal and prudence—composure and warmth—patience and sensibility—submission and dignity—sublime sanctity and tender sympathy—piety that rose to the loftiest devotion, and benevolence that could stoop to the meanest sufferer—intense abhorrence of sin, and profound compassion for the sinner, mingle their varied rays in the tissue of his character, and produce a combination of virtues such as the world never saw besides, and such as the most sanguine enthusiasm never ventured to anticipate."* When he stood at the bar of the high priest and of Pilate, he never lost his dignity, never parted with his composure. Majestic amid reproaches, calm under injuries, with the port of a sovereign and the serenity of a martyr, he met every assault of his enemies without flinching, and without

* Dr. W. L. Alexander: "Christ and Christianity.

retaliation, and united with a fortitude that astonished the stern and haughty Roman—a meekness and tenderness that had all but melted that iron heart. "View him at any stage of his earthly career, and under any of the circumstances in which the evangelists have represented him, and we see the same completeness of character, the same unparalleled combination of excellences, the existence of any one of which in an ordinary mortal, in the degree in which they all appear in Christ, would draw towards him the admiration of all who knew him." Such was Jesus Christ, without fault, without defect. But he stands absolutely alone. A second like him is not to be found.

The appearance of one, and of only one perfect man, amid all the generations that have peopled the earth these six thousand years, is a great mystery, of which no other explanation is adequate but that which is furnished by the evangelical record. So far from being anomalous, the story of his miraculous birth is altogether natural. Any thing else would not have been in keeping with the history of the one sinless man. "His virgin mother is a beautiful and simple reality. It would have been incongruous, even offensive, had *he* not been thus physically separated from mankind."

This conclusion will carry us a step further. We go out among mankind to find, in practice, what is just and true and good; and we find here a fragment and there a fragment of great beauty, and we try to put all the fragments together in their proper place and order, to form a consistent whole; till at last we come to One in whom virtue and goodness are not fragmentary, but entire, wanting nothing to form the most perfect model of human excellence. But we cannot think that it was for this end alone, or chiefly,

that the course of nature was set aside, and the Holy Ghost overshadowed the virgin mother of our Lord. It was that the human being thus wondrously created might be the visible tabernacle and Shekinah of God among men. The sinless one was "God manifest in the flesh." This is a fact, profoundly mysterious indeed, but also ineffably glorious. And when once this fact is admitted, we are urged on to another conclusion. The end of the indwelling of God in Jesus Christ was not the mere revelation of the being and character of God, but the redemption of man by the great atonement of the cross. There are teachers many, and examples many, but there is only one Saviour. Should we go from worthy to worthy among the saints of God, and ask life of them, Enoch, and Moses, and Daniel, and Paul, and John, will each reply, "It is not in me; behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. He is preferred before us; his shoes' latchet we are not worthy to unloose: he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

From the admission of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are thus led forward through an ever-widening circle of truth, till we have embraced the whole gospel of salvation. But our present object is to set forth the sinless One of Nazareth as THE IDEAL AND MODEL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. He is our EXAMPLE. Would we rise to eminence in any profession, we shall study the best models, and find in one of them, or form, by a combination of elements scattered over several, the ideal of our future life; and on the purity and loftiness of this ideal, as well as on the simplicity and earnestness of our endeavour to realize it, will our success depend. Our spiritual ideal is Christ. In the one history and the

one character, at once human and divine, of Jesus Christ, the Christian finds the highest type of spiritual excellence; and into this highest type it is the will of his God that he should be moulded.

But this statement may suggest difficulties which will prove a practical hindrance in our following Christ. The union of the human and divine natures in the person of our Lord is a difficulty which must ever meet us in endeavouring to weigh his conduct, and estimate his motives and principles of action, according to the standard of mankind. Practically, however, the difficulty is much lessened by distinctly remembering that Jesus Christ was a *true man*. How his Godhead was united to or acted upon his humanity we do not know; but we do know that the one did not destroy the other, or supersede the natural working of the principles and faculties proper to it. And in this *fact* we must rest. It is not of the God, but of the man we think, when we strive and pray that the life of Jesus may be reproduced and made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Even the *sinlessness* of our Exemplar may itself become a difficulty. That he must be sinless, in order to his offering an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of men, we feel. That, if other than sinless, he could not be a true and perfect model, we feel likewise. But his very sinlessness seems to create an impassable gulf between him and us. In him there was neither seed nor blade nor fruit of evil. In our natural character there is "no good thing." He may be our ideal, but how can we hope to realize it? And, in our strivings after it, must we not tread a path which he never trod, and pass through conflicts which he never knew?

This difficulty will be removed, in part at least, by remembering, in the first place, that, though sinless, Christ's nature was capable of progress,—spiritual as well as physical and intellectual progress. Entire and sinless purity may be but the basis of endless progress. Adam was without spot as he came from the hands of God; but had he continued holy for one hundred years, and all these years actively served his Maker and resisted every temptation to sin, his holiness would have become brighter and stronger. The saints are without spot when they enter heaven; but their holiness grows, as well as their knowledge, amid the services and studies of the heavenly world. Entire purity does not, then, exclude the idea of progress. And as to Christ, the fact is certain. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.—Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*

Christ's growth "in spirit" was, indeed, in some important respects different from ours. His progress was an onward and upward growth from a sinless root, perfect and pure at every stage, never needing correction or change, uninterrupted, unmarred, for one moment or in one instance, by inward disease or outward injury. Our true progress begins by a radical change of the original bent and bias of the soul; and every subsequent attainment costs an effort and a struggle, advancement being perpetually checked by inward corruption or outward temptation, and all the attainments actually made exhibiting signs of weakness or defect.

The difficulty created by this difference between the great Exemplar and his followers will be mate-

* Luke ii. 40, 52.

rially lessened by remembering, in the second place, that, *though sinless, he was subjected to temptation.* "He was tempted like as we are." Let it not be supposed that temptation was nothing to him, because he was all pure. Our first parents were sinless when they were first tempted; and yet they yielded and fell. The temptation of the second Adam was as deep and real, but he yielded not: he was more than a conqueror. His likeness to us, or ours to him, in the matter of temptation, will be spoken of in another place. At present we only remark the fact, that he was tempted; that his temptation was not shadowy, but real; that, though he "did no sin," he had to fight with sin, and overcame it only by the earnest use of the sword of the Spirit.

There is another consideration which lessens the distance between Christ's experience and ours. *Though sinless, he was a sufferer.* The mystery of a sinless sufferer can be explained only on the assumption that he suffered for others, the just for the unjust. His condition of suffering we look at now, however, only in relation to his being the ideal and model of our Christian life. His sufferings demanded the exercise of those same virtues and graces which are required by ours. And how gloriously they were exhibited is known to the most superficial reader of his history.

Still it may be said that the life and doings of Jesus Christ were, to so large an extent, supernatural as to remove them out of the circle in which we move and have our being. He entered the world by a miracle, and left it by a miracle. If for thirty years he lived without miracle, that portion of his life is unrecorded. For those three years and a half during which we are

permitted to trace his footsteps, he may be said to have lived in the supernatural. In the house of feasting and in the house of mourning, on the highway and in the temple, on the sea and on the mountain, both visible nature and unseen spirits were subject to his control; and his mighty powers were put forth on the right hand and on the left. All this is true. But it is not true that all this renders his life so unlike ours that it cannot be our model. No character can stand farther removed than that of Jesus Christ from that of the mere wonder-worker, who dwells in a region foreign to our own, and unapproachable to our spirits. His life is that of a true man. And, amid all his miracles, the man's heart shows itself so constantly, that we can forget the supernatural in the perfect naturalness of all the moral elements and principles of his character. To say nothing of those utterances and doings that were not associated with supernatural signs, his very miracles have thus "left us an example that we should follow his steps." If we cannot say to the widowed mother's only son, "Arise," we can stand by the bier, and bear the widow's sorrows. If we cannot say to the buried Lazarus, "Come forth," we can weep with Mary and Martha, and rejoice, too, that their brother shall rise again at the last day. If we cannot take five loaves, and with them feed five thousand hungry men, we can at least deal of our own bread to the hungry, and befriend the outcast and the naked. If it cannot now be said, in reference to our ministration, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed," we may so follow Christ as to be able to appropriate the words of Job, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for

joy.—I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out."*

Thus the example of Christ is not the less natural that it is at the same time supernatural. Nor are we stayed in our progress by any question as to how far it is possible for us to attain his perfection. We may labour to attain ever-growing knowledge, even with the belief that we shall not attain perfect knowledge in this life. We may labour after ever-increasing and ever-improving health, with the belief that perfect health is impossible. Why, then, should it be neccessary to determine whether it be or be not possible to attain perfect exemption from sin, and perfect conformity to Christ in this world, in order to our pressing towards the goal for the prize of our high calling? It is enough to know that, as Christians, we can tolerate no sin, and be content with no defect. Our ideal is perfect. Whether we may ever fully realize it in this life or not, we shall press towards it. And if we are rightly minded, naught on earth shall turn us aside from the pursuit till we reflect an unbroken image of him who did no sin, and in whose mouth there was no guile.

"Oh for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me.

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And filled with love divine;
Perfect and right, and pure and good;
A copy, Lord, of thine."

* Job xxix. 13, 15, 16.

PART THE FIRST.

WORK.

CHAPTER I.—THE SOUL'S WORK.
CHAPTER II.—THE WORLD'S WORK.
CHAPTER III.—SOCIAL WORK.

"My Father worketh hitherto; and I work."
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"Go labour on; spend and be spent;
Thy joy to do the Father's will,
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?

"Go labour on: 'tis not for naught:
Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain.
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not:
The Master praises:—What are men?

"Go labour on: enough, while here,
If he shall praise thee, if he deign
Thy willing heart to mark and cheer,
No toil for him shall be in vain."

HORATIUS BONAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOUL'S WORK.

CONTENTS.—Requisites to its successful prosecution—Its proper end—Similitude by Dr. Payson—By Samuel Pearce—The grand principle of Christ's life—Of the Christian's—Exaggeration of it by Madame Guyon—The apostle John—Paul—Brainerd—Light—Love—Examples of harmonious goodness—Paul—John Howe—Henry Martyn—Brainerd and Fletcher of Madeley contrasted—The Patriarchs constitutionally different—The glory of Christ—Practical dangers—The neglect of little things—Perfection made up of trifles—How Christian love is to be cultivated—By the knowledge and contemplation of the divine character—The necessity of reconciliation—Permanent application of first principles—Edward Bickersteth and Dr. Chalmers—Specific means of spiritual improvement—Written covenants—Resolutions—Self-examination—Private journals—Means of Christ's progress — Prayer—Holy Scripture — Havelock — Gardiner — Henry Martyn—Sarah Martin—Chalmers—George Wagner—Sabbath ordinances—John Wesley and the Mystics—Christ and external ordinances.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."—MATT. v. 8.

Along the mountain track of life,
Along the weary lea,
O'er rocks, 'mid storms, in joy, in strife,
Let this my heart-cry be,
"Nearer to Thee; nearer to Thee."

This pilgrim-path by thee was trod,
JESUS, my King, by thee;
Traced by thy feet, thy tears, thy blood,
In love, in death, for me.
Oh! bring my soul nearer to thee.

Let every step, let every thought,
Sweet mem'ries bear of thee;
And hear the soul thy love hath bought,
Whose war-cry oft shall be,
"Nearer to THEE; nearer to THEE."

Be it the heaven I hope above,
To live and move in thee.
Oh! by thy past, thy promised love,
Grant these blest words to me,
"ASCEND, FORGIVEN, nearer to ME."

THE SOUL'S WORK.

This is the hardest work of all, involving more of conflict and continuous effort than any other, but the most blessed in its present satisfactions, and the most triumphant in its issues. Of its conflicts we shall speak hereafter, of its aims and endeavours now.

But the very first thing that is required to its successful prosecution is the conviction *that spiritual progress is a work*, and is not to be attained without toil and painstaking. The sun ascends the heaven from dawn to midday: the season advances from dead winter to living spring and ripe autumn: all independently of the human will. But it is not so with the kingdom of God, either in its external progress throughout the world, or in its internal progress in the individual soul. In some aspects it is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."* But in other aspects likewise does it resemble the processes of husbandry. There must be the plowing, and the sowing, and the watering, and the reaping. There are powers, divine powers, at work in the field, over which the husbandman has no control, although without them his labours will be in vain. But these powers do not supersede the husbandman's labours; and, by the ordinance of God himself, the

* Mark iv. 26, 27.

human work is as essential to the production of the harvest as the divine.

The language of New Testament piety is not that of mere repose in the power and faithfulness of God: it breathes a spirit of personal and unceasing effort: "So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* If ever Christian might trust to the force of the first impulse which he received in conversion, or to the spontaneous action of the principles implanted in his soul by the grace of God, or to the security afforded by divine promises, and give himself no concern about his progress or perseverance, that Christian was Paul the apostle. But he was far otherwise minded. And only on the Grecian stadium, with its hard-disciplined, lightly girt, eager, panting runners and wrestlers, could he find the human emblem of the intenseness of effort and vigilance with which he was accustomed to urge onward in his Christian course. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."† And in accordance with his own practice were his instructions to others—instructions, not the fruit of his own wisdom, but of divine inspiration—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God

* 1 Corinthians ix. 24—27. † Philippians iii. 13, 14.

which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* In the same spirit the apostle Peter wrote—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . . Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."†

Next in importance to the conviction that the soul is not passive, but active, in spiritual progress, and that its activity must be earnest and incessant, is *a distinct understanding of the end of its endeavours;* an end which may be set forth either in the language of figure and analogy, or in the simpler but less impressive form of direct statement.

Dr. Payson addressed his flock on one occasion in these words—"Suppose professors of religion to be ranged in different concentric circles around Christ as their common centre. Some value the presence of their Saviour so highly, that they cannot bear to be at any distance from him. Even their work they will bring up and do it in the light of his countenance; and, while engaged in it, will be seen constantly raising their eyes to him as if fearful of losing one beam of his light. Others, who, to be sure, would not be content to live out of his presence, are yet less wholly absorbed by it than these, and may be seen a little farther off, engaged here and there in their various callings, their eyes generally upon their work,

* Philippians ii. 12, 13. † 2 Peter i. 5. 11.

but often looking up for the light which they love. A third class, beyond these, includes a doubtful multitude, many of whom are so engaged in their worldly schemes, that they may be seen standing sideways to Christ, looking mostly the other way, and only now and then turning their faces towards the light. And yet farther out, amongst the last scattered rays, so distant that it is often doubtful whether they come at all within their influence, is a mixed assemblage of busy ones, some with their backs wholly turned upon the sun, and most of them so careful and troubled about their many things as to spare but little time for their Saviour." The aim and purpose of the Christian soul must be to press into the innermost of these circles. To be content with a place in any of the circles that are without, will be at once the surrender of privilege and the violation of duty.

The Rev. Samuel Pearce, in a familiar letter to a friend, wrote as follows—"What are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep near the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat; whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light. Yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things may be affirmed of all: all keep time to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the farther they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions. And is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives. But, alas! we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbits; at

one time glowing beneath the ray divine; at another freezing and congealing like icicles." Adopting this figure, the aim and purpose of the Christian soul is to move in an orbit as near to the central sun as possible, and to move in it steadily, receiving and reflecting all the light of which its powers render it capable.

In other words, the aim and purpose of the Christian soul is to attain the moral likeness of Christ.

Now we know the principle which governed the life of Christ. It is disclosed in the prophetic words, "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."* The will of God, which *he* knew immediately and infallibly, was his rule: it was the power which animated and inspired him in action. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"† "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."‡ The life of Jesus Christ was one of perfect obedience; obedience to the living and personal Author of the law; obedience, not in the letter merely, but in the spirit. The surrender of himself to God was full and unreserved. The principle which regulated his actions was not the constraining consciousness of a work which must be done, but the free spontaneous impulse of love, moving him to do what his nature would not let him leave undone. His was love to God, and love to man. He drew the copious streams from the divine fountain, not in order to keep them to himself, but that he might constantly, unweariedly, impart them to others. The character of the Lord Jesus presents to us the harmony of a life

* Psalm xl. 7, 8, † Luke ii. 49. ‡ John iv. 34; vi. 38.

which, in action as well as in suffering, was ever equally penetrated with the Spirit of God; which had its source in the perfect love of God, and realized itself in the highest and most costly love to man. Sin, which is in its very nature antagonistic to God, can find no place where selfishness, which is its essence and principle, is utterly abolished by the full energy of love to God and man.

It is not lawful for us, the saved, to be content with an aim short of having our souls attuned, as was that of Christ, the Saviour. We are like him in proportion as our will, like his, is in union and unison with the will of God in *all things*—in the method of our salvation, in the providence which governs us, and in the whole law of our earthly life. "To believe, to feel, to speak, to act *exactly* as God will have me," said the Rev. Samuel Pearce; "to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing short of this, can make my bliss complete. But all this is mine. Oh! the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Madame Guyon; born April 13th, 1648; died June 9th, 1717.

There are few examples of a will in harmony with the will of God more illustrious than that of Madame GUYON. But a few weeks before her death she wrote to a friend — "Last night my pains were so great as to call into exercise all the resources and aids of faith. God heard the prayer of his poor sufferer. Grace was triumphant. It is trying to nature; but I can still say, in this last struggle, that I love the hand that smites me." And this is the spirit

which animated her long life of active labour and of varied sorrow. To be nothing in herself, to find her all in God, to know, to do, and, as a child, to suffer her Father's will, was the one aim of her prayers and endeavours.

With Madame Guyon's views of the harmony of the human will with the divine there was intermingled, however, an error of no small magnitude, an error which has often appeared in forms both less and more extravagant than in her. Jeremy Taylor relates, in one of his sermons, the following legend: — "Saint Lewis the King having sent Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, on an embassy, the bishop met a woman on the way, grave, sad, fantastic, and melancholy, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. He asked what these symbols meant. She answered, 'My purpose is, with fire to burn paradise, and with water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God.'" This fanciful personage may be regarded as the embodiment of that religious idea to which is given the name of Quietism, or Mysticism. The idea that the soul is "made perfect in love," only when it loves God "purely," without regard or reference of any kind to the benefits and mercies which it has received from the divine hand; when it loves God so purely, for his own sake, as to be willing to endure even eternal wrath if it should please him so to ordain—this idea is involved in many of Madame Guyon's writings, and nowhere more affectingly than in her poem, entitled "The Dealings of God, or the Divine Love in bringing the Soul to a state of Absolute Acquiescence." It begins:—

> " 'Twas my purpose, on a day,
> To embark and sail away.
> As I climbed the vessel's side,
> Love was sporting in the tide:
> 'Come,' he said, 'ascend, make haste:
> Launch into the boundless waste.' "

And, after being tossed on "the boundless waste" for a season, the soul's courage was tried by being cast on the "briny wave," without ship or visible support of any kind. But instead of resenting this "unexpected turn," or wishing herself on shore, "Be still," she cried: "if I must be lost I will."

Other difficulties followed. She cried, but in vain: "Love was gone, and would not hear." The soul's one desire was now that Love would return, content that he should "frown with wrath or smile with grace:" only let him return. But it was not to be. And at last the soul exclaims:—

> " Be not angry: I resign
> Henceforth all my will to thine.
> I consent that thou depart,
> Though thine absence breaks my heart.
> Go, then, and for ever too:
> All is right that thou wilt do."

"This"—the poem concludes—

> " This was just what Love intended:
> He was now no more offended:
> Soon as I became a child,
> Love returned to me and smiled.
> Never strife can more betide
> 'Twixt the Bridegroom and his bride."

Now this poem indicates states of mind which, if rightly understood, are mutually irreconcilable; a yearning of soul after God as the highest good, and yet a willingness to part with God for ever if that should be his will. And it is only by means of some hidden sophism we can persuade ourselves that we love God as our chiefest good, and yet are willing, and

that because we love him so purely, to be separated from him for ever. To show our love to God by willingness to endure perdition, what is it but to attest our devotion to him by our readiness to hate him for ever? Madame Guyon imposed on herself in this matter. Her heart was right. She longed most earnestly after God; and to be left at any time without God was the only evil she dreaded. In the prospect of imprisonment in the Bastile for Christ's sake, she wrote:—"I feel no anxiety in view of what my enemies will do to me. I have no fear of anything but of being left to myself. So long as God is with me, neither imprisonment nor death will have any terror." And, when in the Bastile, her language was, "O my God, if thou art pleased to render me a spectacle to men and angels, thy holy will be done. All I ask is, that thou wilt be with and save those who love thee; so that neither life nor death, neither principalities nor powers, may ever separate them from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ." This is not the spirit of one who could say, "I consent that thou depart, though thine absence breaks my heart." Her heart *could not* be reconciled to the absence of her Lord. The language of her heart, as well as of her pen, was—

> "Could I be cast where thou art not,
> That were, indeed, a dreadful lot;
> But regions none remote I call,
> Secure of finding God in all.
> My country, Lord, art thou alone;
> No other can I claim or own;
> The point where all my wishes meet,
> My law, my love, life's only sweet."

The friend of Madame Guyon, Archbishop Fénélon, came nearer the truth on the subject of "pure" or "mixed" love in his book, "The Maxims of the Saints."

Of the love of God, he says, there are various kinds; or at least there are various feelings which go under that name.

First.—There is what may be called mercenary or selfish love, that is to say, that love of God which originates in an exclusive and sole regard to our own happiness. Those who love God with no other love than this, love him just as the miser loves his money, and just as the voluptuous man loves his pleasures; attaching no value to God, except as a means to an end; and that end is the gratification of themselves. Such love, if it can be called by that name, is unworthy of God. He does not ask it; he will not receive it. It is a love of oneself rather than of God.

Secondly.—There is another kind of love, which does not exclude a regard to our own happiness as a motive of love, but which at the same time requires this motive to be subordinate to a much higher one, namely, that of a regard to God's glory. This love is not necessarily selfish and wrong. On the contrary, when the two objects of it, God and ourselves, are relatively in the right position, that is to say, when we love God as he ought to be loved, and love ourselves no more than we ought to be loved, it is a love which, in being properly subordinated, is unselfish and is right.

Fénélon admits that it is proper, in addressing even religious men, to appeal to the passions of fear and of hope. "Such appeals are recognized in the Holy Scriptures, and are in accordance with the views and feelings of good men in all ages of the world. The motives involved in them are powerful aids to beginners in religion; assisting, as they do, very

much, in repressing the passions, and in strengthening the practical virtues."

But not to beginners only, but to matured Christians likewise, may these motives be addressed. We *must* love God for his own sake; we must love him with heart, soul, mind, and strength, for the glory, excellence, and holiness of his own character. But we *may* love him at the same time for the blessings of his grace and providence. The former is sometimes called the love of complacency, and the latter the love of gratitude. To insist on the former alone, and to exclude the latter, is inconsistent at once with the constitution of our nature and with the simplicity of the gospel. "We love Him because he first loved us," says that disciple who, of all men, may be supposed to have best understood "the science of pure love." Even the redeemed before the throne sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever." If saints in glory are not so absorbed with the one idea of the divine excellency, as the object of their love, as to overlook or rise above the idea of the benefits which divine grace hath conferred on them, shall we be surprised to find that the most matured saints on earth do not exclude the good they have received, and the good they hope for, from their thoughts, as a motive and stimulus to the love of God? It was in extreme old age, with the experience of sixty years after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, with the guidance of inspiration, and when on the verge of heaven, that the apostle John said, "We love him because he first loved us," and made this the foundation of that

"perfect love" which "casteth out fear."* In the daily prospect of martyrdom, the apostle Paul, whose Christian life was one of the purest unselfishness, contemplated, with grateful satisfaction, the good that was in store for him in heaven:—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."†

David Brainerd; born April 20, 1718; died October 9, 1787.

David Brainerd, one of the holiest of men, burned with vehement desire to love God abstractedly from every other consideration than the glory, excellence, and holiness of the divine character. Yet we find in his diary such entries as these: "I found my heart going out after God in longing desires of conformity after him, and in secret prayer found myself quickened, and drawn out in praise for all that he had done for me; yea, for all my trials and distresses. . . . . Time appeared to me an inch long, and eternity at hand: I saw that a moment would bring me to a world of peace and blessedness." He was longing for "a world of peace and blessedness," that he might love God for his own sake, and without distraction, but certainly *not* without a *personal* cause for loving him. The very aspect in which he thought of heaven, as a "world of peace and blessedness," involved the consideration of his own happiness. And it is instructive to find in Madame Guyon herself, after all her speculations on "pure love," and the "annihilation of self," that the recognition of the personal good she received from Christ only became clearer and more distinct as she

*1 John iv. 18, 19. † 2 Timothy iv. 8.

approached the end of her course. "The greatest satisfaction I can have," she said, "is the knowledge that the Lord whom I love is what he is; and that, being what he is, he never will or can be otherwise. If I am saved at last, it will be the free gift of God; since I have no worth and no merit of my own." Thus did she connect the hope of personal *salvation* with her glorying in God. "If I can only be accepted of him," was her thought in the Bastile, "I am willing that all men should despise and hate me. Their strokes will polish what may be defective in me, so that I may be presented in peace to him for whom I die daily. Without his favour I am wretched. O Saviour, I present myself before thee, an offering, a sacrifice. Purify me in thy blood, that I may be accepted of thee." And in her "last will," written a short time before her death, she said: "It is to thee, O Lord God, that I owe all things; and it is to thee that I now surrender up all that I am. . . . . Thou knowest that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that I desire but thee alone. Within thy hands, O God, I leave my soul, not relying for my salvation on any good that is in me, but solely on thy mercies, and the merits and sufferings of my Lord Jesus Christ."

"God is light;" and they who do his will from the heart, as did Christ, bear his image; they are "light in the Lord." Of all material things, light is the most glorious, (described by the bard of "Paradise Lost" as "Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,") and therefore the most fit to be the symbol of the divine character. But light is a compound of various rays; and while we admire its bright integrity as it streams from the sun, we admire its component parts

as they are seen in the rainbow. In the character of Christ, we find all excellences so commingled and proportioned as to form pure light; but we may, at the same time, study these excellences separately; and then are they beautiful as the variegated hues of the rainbow. In the characters of his followers, virtues and graces are not so harmonized as to produce the effect of pure light. The reflection of his light in them is mirrored forth with manifold variety, according to the differences of various minds, "even as the morning sun comes to us in the hues of the mountain, the waves of the sea, the flowers of the field, and the innumerable drops of dew, each vieing with the rest to show forth some beam of the great luminary."

We put the same truth in another form when we say that the love of God in the heart is a many-fruited principle. It is the root whence grow what may be called both the larger and the smaller virtues and graces of the Christian character. And these are found in a great variety of proportions, so that we naturally select individuals as types of particular graces, or their lives as examples of particular lessons and truths. Thus, in a well-known book,* we have chapters on "William Tyndale, or Labour and Patience;" "Richard Hooker, or a Soul in Love with God's Law and Holy Order;" "Robert Leighton, or the Peacefulness of Faith;" "Sir Matthew Hale, or Secular Diligence and Spiritual Fervour;" "John Bunyan, or Spiritual Valour and Victory;" "Richard Baxter, or Earnest Decision;" "Matthew Henry, or Meekness of Wisdom;" "George Whitefield, or Seraph-

* "The Lights of the World," by the Rev. John Stoughton.

like Zeal;" "John William Fletcher of Madeley, or Intense Devotion;" "John Newton, or Social Affections Sanctified;" "Henry Martyn, or Self-Denial." And these might be multiplied indefinitely. All the graces of the Spirit spring from the same root of faith and love in the renewed heart; but they do not all and always grow alike vigorously. And even where they all exist, and that in some good measure, it often happens that one overshadows the rest.

Men are found occasionally, however, who may be cited as examples of harmonious goodness, rather than of pre-eminence in particular graces. Among the men of the Bible, Moses and Paul were of this order. Both are very distinguishable from those with whom their names are much associated, as Moses from Aaron, and Paul from John, but it is chiefly in this very respect. "As the mind tries to rest upon the prominent points of the character which the career of Moses evinces, we find ourselves baffled," says Dr. Kitto. "We think of the faith of Abraham, of the conscientiousness of Joseph, of the contrition of David, of the generosity of Jonathan, of the zeal of Elijah—but what do we regard as the dominant quality of Moses? It is not to be found. The mind is perplexed in the attempt to fix on any. It is not firmness, it is not perseverance, it is not disinterestedness, it is not patriotism, it is not confidence in God, it is not meekness, it is not humility, it is not forgetfulness of self, that forms his distinguishing characteristic. It is not any one of these. It is all of them. His virtues, his graces, were all equal to each other; and it was their beautifully harmonious operation and development which constituted his noble, and all but perfect,

character. This was the greatness of Moses: this was the glory of his character. It is a kind of character rare in any man; and in no man, historically known, has it been so completely manifested." Dr. Kitto thinks "the exigencies of even those great affairs which engaged his thought, did not, and could not, call forth on any *one* occasion, *all* the high qualities with which he was gifted. It is rarely possible to see more than one high endowment in action at the same time. But we find Moses equal to every occasion: he is never lacking in the virtue which the occasion requires him to exercise; and by this we know that he possessed them all."

The apostle Paul seems to us remarkably like Moses in these respects. It would be difficult to name the virtue or the grace in which he was found deficient. And if any one virtue or grace were named as the dominant quality in his character, it will be found to have been so supported and surrounded by other qualities as not to rise with undue prominence above the common level of his nature; while the common level of his whole moral being was so elevated as to possess the grandeur without the ruggedness of a land of mountains. In decision of purpose he was immovably firm; but it was not the decision of pride or self-will: where conscientious principle was not involved, he was pliant as the willow. In courage he rose to a height of heroism which has never been transcended; but it was not the courage of a lion-like animal nature, but of a man of gentle and tender spirit, who, like his Divine Master, would not break the bruised reed. In zeal he prosecuted his work with the directness and intense speed with which the arrow seeks the mark; but that zeal never burned

with frantic fury: it only glowed, and always glowed with the warmth of a pure and genial love. If the wickedness of a sorcerer elicited the indignant rebuke, "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" the misery to which ungodly men were hasting drew forth his tears: "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." And in both he was like his Lord. The three graces of faith, hope, and love, with the fruits which these produce according to the circumstances which demand their exercise, will be found in the character of Paul in beautiful harmony. So that, whereas he was once the chief of sinners, we shall not err in calling him the chief of saints. The completeness and comprehensiveness of his Master's character has never been more fully reproduced than in Paul the apostle.

Among moderns, JOHN HOWE may be cited as an example of harmonious goodness rather than of pre-eminence in particular graces. His biographer dwells with enthusiasm on the symmetry of both his intellectual and spiritual character. Most of those characters which have won the admiration of mankind, Mr. Rogers remarks, have been marked by a peculiar *individuality*, resulting from the disproportionate, and, in some cases, enormous development of some master faculty. But from the calm firmament of Howe's mind shine forth all the various faculties of the soul, each with its allotted tribute of light, and with a serene and solemn lustre. "Star differeth from star in glory;" but no

John Howe; born May 17, 1630; died April 2, 1705.

one extinguishes or eclipses the rest. Even so with his spiritual character. His piety determined each faculty to its appropriate objects, and regulated the measure of its exercise. It permitted none of them, so to speak, to *break the ranks*, but led them on in a stately and solemn march in the progress towards perfection. In communion with the supreme good, in contemplation of the noblest forms of spiritual beauty and spiritual excellence, in a diligent preparation for a nobler state of being, he *really* found the highest pleasures of his existence; he attained as complete an ascendency over sensual and animal nature, and as lofty an elevation over the world, as was ever vouchsafed to poor humanity. In all transactions with the world, he exhibited a rare combination of prudence and integrity. In that most delicate task, the reproof of others, he was inflexibly faithful, yet always kind; and while he remembered what was due to the majesty of truth, never forgot what was also due to the claims of charity. He was frank, yet not rash; and cautious, yet free from suspicion. In his deportment, he knew how to conciliate the utmost elevation of character with the gentlest condescension and the acutest sensibility. Dignified, but not austere, he was "grave without moroseness, and cheerful without levity." While he subjected all the inferior principles of his nature to the control of reason, itself enlightened by the Spirit of God, he was not so absurd as to attempt their annihilation; nor did the loftiest attainments of intellect interfere with the varied display of all human charities. His devotion was deep, habitual, and intense; it was not founded on a partial or distorted view of the divine character, but was just the impression likely to be produced by a harmonious

perception of the various relations in which man stands to God under the gospel economy. His piety was habitual and all-pervading as it was deep. It united the most burning zeal with the coolest judgment; the most intense desire for the glory of God with ceaseless efforts for the welfare of man; the loftiest exercises of a deeply meditative and devotional spirit with the sedulous cultivation of the homeliest graces; that rarest of all combinations, the closest communion with the future and the eternal, with a conscientious and busy discharge of all the duties of to-day.

Henry Martyn; born February 18, 1781; died October 16, 1819.

The character of HENRY MARTYN may be cited as an affecting illustration of the grace of self-denial; but it may likewise be cited as an illustration of that *harmony* of graces which distinguished John Howe. In his faith, according to his biographer, there was a singular, a child-like simplicity: great, consequently, was its energy, both in obeying Christ, and in suffering for his name's sake. By this, he could behold blossoms upon the rod, even when it was apparently dead; and in those events which, like the captain of the Lord's host seen by Joshua, presented at first a hostile aspect, he could discern a favourable and a friendly countenance. Having listened to that tender and overwhelming interrogation of his Saviour, "Lovest thou me?" his love was fervently exercised towards God and man, at all times and in all places. For it was not like the land-spring, which runs violently for a season, and then ceases, but resembled the fountain, which flows with a perennial stream from the recesses of the rock. His fear of God, and tenderness of conscience, and watch-

fulness over his own heart, could scarcely be surpassed in this state of sinful infirmity. But it was his humility that was most remarkable: this might be considered as the warp of which the entire texture of his piety was composed; and with this his other Christian graces were so intimately blended, as to beautify and adorn his whole demeanour. It was, in truth, the accordance and consent of various Christian attainments in Mr. Martyn, which were so striking. The *symmetry* of his stature in Christ was as surprising as its *height*. That communion which he held with his God, and which caused his face to shine, was ever chastened, like the patriarch's of old, by the most awful reverence. The nearer the access with which he was favoured, the more deeply did he feel that he was but "sinful dust and ashes." No discordance could he discover between peace and penitence: no opposition between joy in God and utter abasement before him.

To be zealous without love, or to have that which is miscalled charity, without decision of character, is neither difficult nor uncommon. Mr. Martyn's zeal was tempered with love, and his love invigorated by zeal. He combined, also, ardour with prudence; gravity with cheerfulness; abstraction from the world with an enjoyment of its lawful gratifications. His extreme tenderness of conscience was devoid of scrupulosity; his activity in good works was joined to habits of serious contemplation; his religious affections, which were highly spiritualized, exceeded not the limits of the most cautious sobriety, and were so far from impairing his natural affections, that they raised and purified them. "A more perfect character," says one who bore the burden and heat of the day with him in India, "I never met with, nor expect to see on earth."

The variety which is thus exhibited to us, in the harmony attained by some, and in the prominence of particular graces in the character of others, arises from the operation of many causes, some of them involving a degree of blame, and others beyond the power of the will to regulate or control. One of the chief of these is probably to be found in constitutional differences, and in the action of external training and circumstances, a good example of which may be found in the contrast which is presented to us by the experiences of David Brainerd and of Mr. Fletcher of Madeley. "The life of David Brainerd," says the Rev. Robert Hall, "exhibits a perfect pattern of the qualities which should distinguish the instructer of rude and barbarous tribes; the most invincible patience and self-denial, the profoundest humility, exquisite prudence, indefatigable industry, and such a devotedness to God, or rather such an absorption of the whole soul in zeal for the divine glory and the salvation of men, as is scarcely to be paralleled since the age of the apostles. Such was the intense ardour of his mind, that it seems to have diffused the spirit of a martyr over the most common incidents of his life. His constitutional melancholy, though it must be regarded as a physical imperfection, imparts an additional interest and pathos to the narrative; since we more easily sympathize with the emotions of sorrow than of joy.

Brainerd and Fletcher of Madeley contrasted.

"The life of Fletcher of Madeley affords in some respects a parallel, in others a contrast, to that of Brainerd; and it is curious to observe how the influence of natural temperament varies the exhibition of the same principles. With a considerable difference in their religious views, the same zeal, the same spirit-

uality of mind, the same contempt of the world, is conspicuous in the character of each. But the lively imagination, the sanguine complexion of Fletcher, permits him to triumph and exult in the consolatory truths and prospects of religion. He is a seraph who burns with the ardours of divine love; and, spurning the fetters of mortality, he almost habitually seems to have anticipated the rapture of the beatific vision. Brainerd, oppressed with a constitutional melancholy, is chiefly occupied with the thoughts of his pollutions and defects in the eyes of Infinite Purity. His is a mourning and conflicting piety, imbued with the spirit of self-abasement, breathing itself forth in 'groanings which cannot be uttered;' always dissatisfied with itself; always toiling in pursuit of a purity and perfection unattainable by mortals. The mind of Fletcher was habitually brightened with gratitude and joy for what he had attained; Brainerd was actuated with a restless solicitude for further acquisitions. If Fletcher soared to all the heights, it may be affirmed, with equal truth, that Brainerd sounded all the depths of Christian piety; and while the former was regaling himself with fruit from the tree of life, the latter, on the waves of a tempestuous sea, was 'doing business in the mighty waters.' Both equally delighted and accustomed to lose themselves in the contemplation of the Deity, they seemed to have surveyed that infinite Object under different aspects; and while Fletcher was absorbed in the contemplation of infinite benignity and love, Brainerd shrank into nothing in the presence of immaculate purity and holiness.

"The different situations in which they were placed, had probably considerable effect in producing or heightening their respective peculiarities. Fletcher

exercised his ministry in the calm of domestic life, surrounded with the beauties of nature: Brainerd pursued his mission in a remote and howling wilderness, where, in the midst of uncultivated savages, he was exposed to intolerable hardships and fatigues.

The experience of both these holy men would doubtless have been modified and somewhat assimilated by more comprehensive views of divine truth than each possessed; for who ever received the whole of divine truth in its integrity and in the due proportion of its parts? But apart from the different phases of truth which they contemplated, and the difference of their outward circumstances, we cannot imagine men so various in their constitutional tendencies exhibiting exactly the same type of spiritual excellence.

The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are very distinguishable from each other, both constitutionally and religiously. In language full of meaning, we are told that "God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." The expectations which they were encouraged to cherish have been realized, and God's promises to them have been fulfilled. But the discipline of their "pilgrimage" was necessary to prepare them for their "inheritance." And the inspired estimate of their character is applicable rather to the results and issues of this discipline, than to the earlier stages of its progress. When the character of each became developed into maturity and meetness for the better country, of which they were heirs, they may be regarded as good and venerable in the full meaning of the terms; bright examples of that virtue and holiness of which Bible references to them are so suggestive.

But these three men, with a common faith and a common hope, present three types of human nature, and three types likewise of religious character. The character of Abraham, when we first see him, is capable of being vividly realized by our observation of mankind. "There is nothing in anywise unnatural, mysterious, and shadowy, about him. We at once recognize in him a specimen of one of those strong, and genial, and large-hearted men, whose very exterior, for the most part, is significant of a character which we can at once trust in, and reverence, and love." Abraham was one of those who by constitution are calm, dignified, and moderate in their own consciousness of strength; but who, when occasion requires it, are as inflexible in their assertion of just claims, and as courageous in helping others to defend them. These qualities were very strikingly shown in his reply to the king of Sodom, and again in his concession "of the left hand or the right," to his nephew Lot, compared with his enterprising efforts to rescue the same person, when it was reported that he had been taken captive. So strongly indeed is Abraham's character developed, that we may almost *see* this dignified and affectionate chieftain of his people when we have read only a few pages of his history.*

The son is portrayed in a few words with hardly less vividness than the father. Isaac was "a man of amiable and gentle disposition; susceptible to the influence of those around him; governed more by his affections than by his judgment; meditative in his turn of mind; with few wants; good rather than great; fitted to receive impressions and follow a guide; not to originate important influences, or per-

* G. S. Drew: "Scripture Studies."

form deeds of renown. His almost entire silence, as he submissively yielded to his father, when they went together to Mount Moriah; his removal from the wells which he digged until he found another for which they strove not; the expressive statement that he went out into the fields to meditate, or to pray at eventide; his submissiveness under the influence of Rebecca;—these and other familiar passages in his history, enable us to recognize this man also, in the character which has been ascribed to him."

Jacob was very different from both his father and grandfather; and his constitutional tendencies are plainly disclosed in every passage of his history. He was a plain man, and to this extent like his father, that he was of a more quiet and gentle disposition than his brother, content with the home of his parents' tents, and with the peaceful occupations of a shepherd's life. Esau was a man of impulse and impetuosity, who spurned the home pursuits of his brother, and betook himself to the fields and mountains in search of adventure and of game. On several well-known occasions, we see Jacob seeking and attaining his purpose by stealthy and subtle management, in part the result of the partial and scheming ambition of his mother, but indicating no doubt a constitutional tendency of his own. "Timid, conceding, and while insignificant in respect of those exterior and personal qualities which produce an immediate impression wherever they are beheld, ambitious nevertheless, desirous of a higher position and wider influence than seemed to be within his reach, and determined also by some means to obtain them,—Jacob is disclosed to us."

The constitutional characters of these three men

thus differed much the one from the other; and so, within certain limits, did their religious characters. That they were partakers of a common faith and hope we are assured on apostolic authority, and evidences of it pervade the history of their lives. Under the guidance of the "God of glory," Abraham was separated from an idolatrous household, and led, from a land which "served other gods," into the homestead of the new race of which he was to be the father. Wherever he settled, and for however brief a period, he built an altar to Jehovah, and was habitually conversant with things unseen and eternal. In all this, his son Isaac was in full sympathy with him. When Abraham was called to offer his son on Mount Moriah, the younger patriarch must have concurred in the offering. "It was a joint testimony of their affiance in Him in whom both claimed their highest life." The devoutness of Isaac's spirit was moreover indicated by what we may conclude were its habitual exercises "in the field at eventide;" and we know that he was favoured with personal communications with the God of his father. The earlier portion of Jacob's history is marred by faithful details of personal delinquencies. But from the memorable night when, as a fugitive from his father's house, he slept on a stone pillow at Bethel, until the hour when in feeble old age he foreshadowed by the prophetic spirit the history of his twelve sons and their descendants, many proofs were given that in him, as in other patriarchs, devout habits and heavenly principles were habitually developed.

But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, purified and ennobled by a common faith and hope, were not fashioned in one mould, and reduced or raised to a

common level. Their constitutional differences still remained; and these, along with the circumstances in which they were placed, determined the form and hue of the fruits of that goodness which they had in common, and which distinguished them from the nations among which they passed their pilgrimage.

It is the glory of our Lord, we thus see, as compared with the chiefest of his servants—both those who lived before his personal advent, and those who lived after—that "he alone stands at the absolute centre, the one completely harmonious man, unfolding all that was in that humanity *equally* upon all sides, *fully* upon all sides, the only one in whom the real and ideal met, and were absolutely one." Even Moses and Paul, to whom we have referred as examples of *harmony* in character, stand at a great distance from their Lord. As compared with him, every other man has idiosyncrasies; some features of his character marked more strongly than others; fitnesses for one task rather than another; more genial powers in one direction than in another. The three chief apostles were not exempted from this law. Their characteristics were not dissolved by the transformation which made them one in Christ, but hallowed to the work they were best fitted to accomplish in the church of God. As *men*, Paul, Peter, and John were very differently constituted; as *apostles*, they had varied and different functions to discharge; and as *Christians*, their graces were exhibited in different combinations and forms. But amidst variety there was unity; unity in the doctrines which they preached, unity in the principles which animated their hearts, and unity in the virtues which adorned their lives. The differences

between them were only differences in the degree in which certain graces were exhibited in their characters, and in the department of service to which their Master called them.

In studying the varied fruits of the one Christian principle in the renewed heart, there are several dangers to which we are exposed—either, on the one hand, the danger of discouragement in not attaining the characteristic excellences of men of different temperaments; or, on the other, that of self-satisfaction in the neglect of virtues and graces on the ground of their being foreign from our constitutional tendencies, or of their being of minor importance.

Luther could not have been what he was but for the natural endowments with which he was gifted, the training which he received, and the circumstances in which he was placed. The gentle child who is nursed in the bosom of an affectionate and enlightened family, and who is sheltered there from every rude wind, from the sins and the persecutions of the world, should feel no discouragement if he is unconscious of the lion-like qualities of the great Reformer. Luther and that child may have in common a true love to the Saviour, and may produce in common those fruits of love to Christ which their respective circumstances demand. And neither should covet to be as the other, provided only that each is fitted for his own place and sphere. The oak cannot be as the vine, nor the vine as the oak; but the one, standing in its own majesty and strength, can resist the storm; and the other, sheltered from the storm, and sustained by the strength of some friendly support, can produce the rich and nutritious grape. Both are pervaded by

a common life, the gift of their Maker; and by the virtue of that common life they perform the very different functions for which they are severally fitted. In Holy Scripture there are what have well been called *elastic* promises: "As thy day, so shall thy strength be;" "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." The strength required by the reformer is not promised to the child, but to each is secured that which each needs.

While some are discouraged by a sense of their deficiency in the characteristic excellences of men of other temperaments than their own, others are apt to rest too contentedly under a sense of such deficiency, as if those duties to which they are, or imagine themselves to be, constitutionally indisposed, were less binding on them. This involves greater danger in the opposite direction. Carry out this notion to its consequences, and it will amount to this, that the easier a duty, the greater its obligation. All duties are strictly of equal obligation. But the less disposed a man is naturally to a particular course of action which it is his duty to pursue, the greater need there is that he should exercise diligence and painstaking in promoting his own advancement therein. What is comparatively easy for one man, may be comparatively difficult for another. If it be a duty in both cases, he who finds it most difficult is bound, instead of neglecting it because of its difficulty, to gird himself with the greater earnestness to its accomplishment.

It is with Christian character as it is in sculpture and painting, very much of its beauty depends on little things. It is told of a gentleman who had engaged an artist to execute a piece of sculpture for

him, that, visiting the artist's studio after an absence of several weeks, he supposed that little progress had been made. "What have you been doing?" he asked. "Working on this figure," was the reply. "But I see nothing done since my last visit." "Why," answered the artist, "I have brought out this muscle; I have modified this part of the dress; I have slightly changed the expression of the lip." "But these are trifles," said the visitor. "True, sir," replied the artist, "but perfection is made up of trifles."

The Christian contents himself too often with an outline of Christian character, instead of caring for its details. We are governed, it is true,—and the truth is important,—by great principles rather than minute rules. But it is equally true that the Bible portraiture of the Christian character includes in it most carefully the smaller and less prominent features, as well as the larger. The Bible describes the Christian virtues and graces with great minuteness, and says, "*Think* on these things." But Christians often fail to *think* on them; and the consequence is a great lack of symmetry, and beauty, and completeness in their character.

Much of the beauty of Christ's character arose from the minuteness and comprehensiveness with which, so to speak, its parts were filled in. There were no blank spaces, no moral vacancies in him. He was *altogether* lovely. "A life of great and prodigious exploits would have been comparatively an easy thing for him; but to cover himself with beauty and glory in small things, to fill and adorn every little human occasion, so as to make it divine, this was a work of skill which no mind or hand was equal to but that which shaped the atoms of the world." It was not, however, that he

laboured to make up by outward form and artificial details for the want of inward life and spirituality. Every part of his practical living was the outgrowth of the life that was within. And thus, by giving the most varied possible embodiment to the spiritual life which he has imparted to us, "it becometh us," like him, "to fulfil all righteousness." But "the act of righteousness which we should select as most worthy of commendation and most demonstrative of piety of heart," to use the words of the Rev. Henry Melville, "may not be that on which the Almighty would fix, when signifying the approval of one of his servants. It may rather be, that some sacrifice which the world never knew, some exertion which was limited to his own home, and perhaps even his own heart, has been the most approved thing in the sight of the Lord, of all wrought by one whose time, and substance, and strength have been wholly devoted to the cause of religion. It may not be when, like Paul, he is fighting 'with beasts at Ephesus;' nor when, like Stephen, he is laying down his life for the truth, that a man of God does what specially draws on him the smile of his Maker. There may have been quiet and unobserved moments, moments spent in solitude and prayer, in which he has fought what God accounted a harder battle and won a nobler victory. And in the arrangements of his household, in meeting some domestic trial, in subduing some unruly passion, he may virtually have displayed a stronger trust, and a simpler preference of the promises of the Most High, than when he stood forth as the champion and confessor, amid all the excitement of a public scene, and gained for himself a deathless renown. 'The Lord seeth not as man seeth;' and mightily should it console those who are not so circum-

stanced as to have great opportunity of making efforts and sacrifices on behalf of Christ and his cause, that it is not necessarily the martyr whose self-surrender is most accepted of God, nor the missionary whose labours and endurances are most held in remembrance; but that the private Christian, in his struggles with himself, in his mortification of his passions, in the management of his family, in his patience under daily troubles, in his meek longings for a brighter world, may be yet dearer to his Father in heaven, and be thought to have shown more faith, than many a man who has entered boldly the desert of heathenism with the cross in his hand, or even ascended the scaffold to seal with his blood his confession of Christ."

In Christian character, then, let it be a first principle that there is nothing "little," and that no duty can be of *secondary* obligation. Constitutional differences will mould and modify our exhibition of the graces of the Spirit; but they afford no warrant for the neglect of any of them.

Love to God is the grand principle, we have seen, which assimilates the Christian to his great Exemplar, the root from which spring the many virtues and graces of the Christian character. How, then, is this love to be cultivated? By what means shall it be nurtured and strengthened? All-important question! There are some fundamental principles bearing upon it which we can only briefly indicate.

First of all, it is necessary that we should know, and, knowing, should study and contemplate the character of God. It is told of a Roman emperor that he was wont to say of his subjects—"Let them hate me, so they but fear me." The only fear that was possible in

these circumstances was the trembling dread of a ruthless and vindictive oppressor, to whose ears groans were music. But let this tyrant be changed, and let his change of heart be seen in a change of government; let him become just, and generous, and merciful, "the father of his people;" and the sentiments of his subjects towards him will change. Love will take the place of hatred in their bosoms. Instead of the lowering gloom, and the deep secrecy, and the suspicious evasions of that "fear which hath torment," there will be the open frankness of confidence and the unsuspecting freedom of love. Now, if men think of God, as the Romans had too much reason to do of their oppressor, or as the heathen have always done of their gods, they will think of him wrongly and falsely; but the effect will be the same: they cannot love, they can only hate and tremble.

Let a father, in the education of his child, adopt the system of constraint and terror, all his ends effected by command and coercion, the rod for ever in his hand, the sole instrument of prevention and punishment; the child, in such a case, will speedily lose all the easy freedom and open artlessness of childhood. He will be afraid to speak, afraid to act, afraid to look; timid, jealous, sullen, cringing, hypocritical, kept in incessant awe by the dread of passionate scolding or of bodily pain. But let the parent change his principle, and instead of the system of passionate and severe coercion, let him adopt that of love. Let him win the affections of his child; let him gain his confidence; let all his instructions, and reproofs, and chastisements be mingled with the meltings of fondness, and the whole of his domestic intercourse be characterized by smiling affection, a corresponding change may be looked for

in the child. For a time, especially if the opposite system has been long in practice, he may wonder, and suspect, and hesitate, and, like the disciples when they saw their risen Master, "believe not for very joy;" but as soon as he is satisfied that the alteration is real, his heart will be dispossessed of the tormenting demon of fear by the gentle yet mighty energy of filial love.*

In God as a Ruler and Father there is all, and more than all, that the most exalted conceptions of these relations can imagine. "Just," and "holy," and "good," are the simple terms in which his character is set forth—inflexibly just, spotlessly holy, ineffably good. Words utterly fail to express his glory as a ruler and a father. But men have wronged him fearfully. They have conceived of him and felt towards him as if he were such a ruler as that Roman tyrant, and such a father as this we have described. They have trembled, and hated, and defied; they have shunned, and distrusted, and disobeyed him. And all this they have done under false impressions of his character. Now these impressions must be corrected. They must learn his true character, for only then can they love him. And then they *would* love him, but for certain evils, more difficult to overcome than ignorance, inherent in their state and condition as fallen sinners.

And this introduces us to another fundamental principle touching the means by which love to God is both awakened and nurtured in the human soul. The knowledge of the glorious holiness of the divine nature will never awaken love in the regions of the lost.

* See "Sermons," by Ralph Wardlaw, D.D, pp. 319, 20.

Nor can it on earth unless such knowledge be accompanied by the hope of forgiveness. The gospel of Christ combines both, and hence its efficacy. It reveals God in all the beauty of his holiness; and it opens to the sinner a way of return to his forgiving Father; it exhibits God as a just God and a Saviour, reconciling men to himself, and with the outstretched arms of love receiving them back to his family. And thus are the rebellious hearts of sinners subdued and melted. With penitential sorrow and grateful love they are constrained to give themselves to God." "The blessed light in which the Divine Being is now seen dispels the 'horror of great darkness' from their minds. The blood of sprinkling having given peace to the conscience, and the freedom of grace having unchained the spirit from the fetters, heavy and galling, that bound it in terror and weighed it down to despair, the sinner, exulting in his newly found liberty, 'runs' with gratitude and gladness in the ways of God's commandments." He is no longer a rebel but a servant, and not a servant merely, but a son, a son who in "the spirit of adoption" trusts, and loves, and obeys.*

Nothing but faith in the one perfect sacrifice of Christ will enable men thus to draw near to God. "The heathen felt this," says Dean Trench, "and all his propitiations, and expiations, and placatory offerings, were dim gropings after it. The Jew felt this, and the blood of bulls and of goats which he offered was a weak prophecy of it. The Christian feels it, and the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, is the perfect fulfilling of this longing. All have alike felt that there must be some such ground, *out* of a

* See this subject illustrated by examples in "The Divine Life," part iv.

man's self, and beyond him, on which he must rest. For what will a man's mendings of himself do, as affording the materials of a reconciliation? When once the awful vision of a holy God has flashed upon his soul, never again to be put by, when once the idea of law, and of the transgression of a law, has been revealed unto him, and (which is the same thing) when once the abysmal deeps of his own sinfulness have yawned beneath his feet, how idle then doth every thing of his own appear for the repairing of the past, for the knitting again the bands of the broken communion with his God! His works! as well might he seek to fill a bottomless pit with pebbles thrown into it one by one, or to pay off at one end a debt with pence, which was accumulating by talents at the other. His works! he cannot so far lie to himself as to believe that they can be better than the source out of which they flow, and that source is unhealed as yet.

"Vain is it, then, for a man to seek in himself the grounds of a restored and renewed intercourse with his God. His doings and his strivings leave him where he was, or leave him further off than before. His sin cleaves to him still; and all his efforts to disengage himself from it serve only to cause it to cling to him the closer: it is to him as the poisoned garment which we read that a fabled hero in an evil hour had put on, and then strove to tear away, but in vain: he could only tear away his own flesh."

The fact that Christ has died for men is the ground on which the holy God is propitious to the guilty, and pardons and saves them; and it is our knowledge and belief of this fact that brings peace to the conscience, and inspires the heart with filial love to

God, and filial confidence in him as our Father and Friend.

These principles have to do not only with the origination of love to God in the heart, but with its growth and permanence. The believer in Christ continues to be subject, like other men, to those natural laws which regulate the movements and form the constitution of the human mind. And it is one of the most remarkable of these laws, that all passive impressions on the mind of man become weaker as they are repeated, and that all active principles are strengthened by their exercise in action. "This truth applies to all our affections," says Joseph John Gurney, "and, amongst others, to that pure affection—love towards God, which will certainly wither in the soul, unless it be cultivated and carried forward into action. That divine grace, by which our love to God is maintained, operates through this peculiar law of our nature: by the motive of love, it leads the soul into various acts; and by these acts our love is increased and confirmed." So that "the soul of the believer must be habituated to action: it must maintain a steady energy towards the sovereign object of its desire: it must always be moving forwards in that holy way which leads to God, and happiness, and heaven. Then, although the first blaze of fervour which often distinguishes the new convert may subside into a calm, the pure affection of love to God will be settled in our souls: it will imbue and characterize our new nature: with a perpetual increase of true brightness it will burn for ever."

Love to God will be exercised and strengthened by active obedience to every part of the will of God. Studying that will carefully, and cultivating "a con-

science void of offence" in reference both to its prohibitions and requirements, the principle of obedience will be stronger and stronger till it possesses all the power of habit. And, "while," to use the words of John Foster, "in the great majority of things, habit is a greater plague than ever afflicted Egypt, in religious character it is eminently a felicity. The devout man exults to feel that, in aid of the *simple* force of the divine principles within him, there has grown by time an accessional power, which has almost taken place of his will, and holds a firm though quiet domination through the general action of his mind. He feels this confirmed habit as the grasp of the hand of God, which will never let him go. From this advanced state he looks with confidence on futurity, and says, I carry the indelible mark upon me that I belong to God: by being devoted to him I am free of the universe; and I am ready to go to any world to which he shall please to transmit me, certain that everywhere, in height or depth, he will acknowledge me for ever."

Love to God will be strengthened by contemplation as well as by obedience. That love should excite love is a principle which our Maker has interwoven with our very nature. "We love God because he first loved us." And would we nurture our love to him we must contemplate his love to us. It is while with unveiled face we behold, as in a glass, the brightness of our Lord's glory, we are ourselves changed into the same likeness.* And the mirror by which the Lord's glory is most clearly reflected upon us is his holy word. The rays of his love as a Creator, as a Ruler,

* 2 Corinthians iii. 18.

and as a Redeemer, shine most brightly in this history of the actual doings and dealings of his love to men. We cannot meditate long on the divine attributes as abstract qualities; but we need never cease to meditate on them as we see them at work and in action in his government and redemption of men. And hence much of the transforming and purifying power which the word of God, as we shall find, has ever exercised over those who have communed much with God in the devout study of its sacred pages.

Love to God cannot be awakened in the human heart, we have seen, by the mere knowledge of his character: there must be the hope of forgiveness through the atonement of the Saviour. And this principle, we have now to remark, is equally essential to the continuance and growth of this divine affection. The character of God, once known and appreciated, must continue to be studied and contemplated: pardon and peace, once received through faith in Christ, must be renewed and sustained by daily application to the Saviour. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," said Christ to Peter. Unwashed by Christ, the sinner is unpardoned, unsaved, unfit for communion with God. But "he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet" from the dust he has gathered by the way; and having done so "he is clean every whit." The outward was ever, in the hands of Christ, the type of the inward. The Christian is "washed," wholly washed, when he looks by faith to the Saviour and is reconciled to God. But he has to travel over the world's dusty road, and to come in contact with the world's defilement, and thus needs to have his *feet* washed daily. And only by the constant washing of

the feet is he kept clean. Only thus is his conscience freed from the daily burden of sin, and his confidence towards God maintained. Only thus is he enabled to run with perseverance the race that is set before him.

This principle is verified in the daily experience of Christians. "The most effectual inducement to obedience," said Professor Halyburton, "is a constant improvement of the blood of Christ by faith, and a sense of forgiveness kept up in the soul." The biographer of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth says, in reference to an early period of his life, "Mr. Bickersteth had fully received the doctrine of free salvation through Christ; therefore, though cast down, he was not in despair; and even in his darkest moments he saw a refuge still open to receive him; but his eye was less fixed on the work the Saviour had wrought out for him, than on the evidences, often imperfect and clouded, of the work that Saviour was accomplishing in him. The aspect of truth most prominent before his mind, was, the heart-searching declaration that 'without holiness no man can see the Lord;' and he had not that full confidence in Christ's pardoning love which enabled him, in his later years, to cast every sin at the foot of the cross, and then to press forward, undistracted by fears as to his own state, to more abundant labours in his Redeemer's cause."

The same truth appears frequently, in characteristic phrase, in the diary of Dr. Chalmers—as thus: "April 20, 1840. Began my first waking minutes with a confident hold on Christ as my Saviour." "April 21. Let the laying hold on Christ as my propitiation be the unvarying initial act of every morning." There are who imagine that, once justified, Christians have no need to pray for pardon. But Christ taught those who

approached God as their "Father in heaven," as often as they said "Give us our daily bread," to say likewise, "Forgive us our trespasses;" and nothing can be more essential to the happy and successful prosecution of the Christian life than, in the words of Dr. Chalmers, to let the laying hold of Christ as their propitiation be the initial act of every morning.

There is a third fundamental principle that should never be forgotten in the cultivation of love to God, and in the practice of those graces which spring from this root. It is the dependence of the soul on the continual supply of the Spirit of God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The inward life of our Lord himself, sinless as he was, was inspired and directed by the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit. "From the beginning to the end of his earthly course, in all the various circumstances in which he was placed, he was the subject of the special and abundant influence of divine grace. With a consciousness that all things were in his power, and with a prompt and consecrated readiness to act and to suffer continually, he felt, at the same time, as a man, entirely dependent; and it never occurred to him that he had anything, or that he could do anything, out of God. From God operating by his Holy Spirit in his heart he received all wisdom and all strength. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him.'" How much more do they need "the supply of the Spirit of grace," who, though made new creatures in Christ Jesus, have still to contend with "an evil heart of unbelief!"

We shall now look at some specific means which have been or may be used for the cultivation of the spiritual life.

There are means of spiritual improvement which are of doubtful tendency, means which are sanctioned by some of the highest names in devotional literature, but which, in some instances at least, have done more harm than good. Such, for example, is the species of express and written covenant with God which Dr. Doddridge recommends in the seventeenth chapter of the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

As to the duty of an entire and unreserved surrender of ourselves to God, there can be no question, and on this point the author's instructions are good, and his arguments valid. Nothing can be more reasonable than that we should acknowledge God as our Sovereign Ruler, and devote ourselves to him as our gracious Benefactor. Nothing can be more apparently equitable than that we, the product of his power and the purchase of his Son's blood, should be his, and his for ever. If rightly minded, our self-surrender will be entire, and cheerful, and immediate. All we are, and all we have, and all we can do, our time, our possessions, will be devoted to him, judging that we are then in the truest and noblest sense our own when we are most entirely his. Dr. Doddridge recommends, however, not only that Christians should thus give themselves to God, but that they should likewise "expressly declare this purpose in the divine presence." "Such solemnity in the manner of doing it," he argues, "is very reasonable in the nature of things; and sure it is highly expedient for binding to the Lord such a treacherous heart as we know our own to be. It will be pleasant

to reflect upon it as done at such and such a time, and in such circumstances of place and method, which may serve to strike the memory and the conscience. The sense of the vows of God which are upon you will strengthen you in an hour of temptation; and the recollection may also encourage your humble boldness and freedom in applying to him under the character and relation of your covenant God and Father, as future exigencies may require." "I would further advise and urge," he says, "that this dedication may be made with all possible solemnity. Do it in express words. And perhaps it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious divines have recommended, to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it, that on such a day, of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration and serious reflection, you came to this happy resolution, that, whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord."

To facilitate compliance with this recommendation, Dr. Doddridge supplies two forms of covenant, or of self-dedication, to be adapted to the circumstances of the person who adopts them. "And when," says the author, "you determine to execute this instrument, let the transaction be attended with some more than ordinary religious retirement. Make it, if you conveniently can, a day of secret fasting and prayer. And when your heart is prepared with a becoming awe of the divine majesty, with an humble confidence in his goodness, and an earnest desire of his favour, then present yourself on your knees before God, and read it over deliberately and solemnly; and when you have signed it, lay it by in some secure place, where you may review it whenever you please; and make it a rule with yourself to review it, if possible, at certain

seasons of the year, that you may keep up the remembrance of it."

The sentiments of Dr. Doddridge's "Examples of Self-dedication" are devout. But the benefits of the practice which he recommends are very *questionable*. It is certain that in the experience of many it has not promoted holiness and steadfastness, but has engendered bondage. The remarks of Mr. Newton on the subject are wise and moderate:—"Many judicious persons," he says, "have differed in their sentiments, with respect to the propriety or utility of such written engagements. They are usually entered into, if at all, in an early stage of profession, when, though the heart is warm, there has been little actual experience of its deceitfulness. Frequently, the young convert, like the Israelites when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore of the Red Sea, fondly supposes that his warfare is at an end, when it is scarcely begun. They believed in the Lord and sang his praises; little apprehending what a wilderness was before them. Thus in the day when the Lord turns our mourning into joy, and speaks peace, by the blood of his cross, to the conscience burdened with guilt and fear, resolutions are formed, which though honest and sincere, prove, like Peter's promise to our Lord, too weak to withstand the force of subsequent unforeseen temptations. Such vows, made in too much dependence upon our own strength, not only occasion a further discovery of our weakness, but frequently give the enemy advantage to terrify and distress the mind. Therefore some persons, of more mature experience, discountenance the practice as legal and improper. But as a scaffold, though no part of an edifice, and designed to be taken down when the building is

finished, is yet useful for a time in carrying on the work, so many young converts have been helped by expedients which, when their judgments are more ripened, and their faith more confirmed, are no longer necessary. Every true believer, of course, ought to devote himself to the service of the Redeemer; yea, he must and will, for he is constrained by love. He will do it not once only, but daily. And many who have done it in writing, can look back upon the transaction with thankfulness to the end of life; recollecting it as a season of peculiar solemnity and impression, accompanied with emotions of heart, neither to be forgotten nor recalled."

The objection which is taken to written covenants may be taken likewise to written RESOLUTIONS as a means of spiritual improvement and steadfastness. And yet examples of such resolutions, as of covenants, may be found in the lives of some of the holiest men.

Before JONATHAN EDWARDS was twenty years of age he had written a series of *Seventy Resolutions* for the regulation of his heart and life. They are prefaced with these words: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake." The first resolution will show how thoroughly he desired to be the Lord's:—

Jonathan Edwards; born in 1703; died in 1758.

"1. *Resolved*, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now or never

so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved, so to do, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever."

No one courted singularity less, and yet if he could not follow the Lord wholly without being singular, his "heart was fixed." The sixty-third of his seventy resolutions is as follows: "On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true lustre, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed: *Resolved*, to act just as I would do if I strove with all my might to be that one who should live in my time."

Jonathan Edwards was not more illustrious for his genius than for his piety. He occupies a high place as a philosopher, and is entitled to an equally high place as a saint. Few men have more entirely lived as "seeing Him who is invisible." But it may be doubted how far his Seventy Resolutions, as such, contributed to this blessed end. It was the result rather of his study of Holy Scripture and his habits of prayer and of self-examination. These are indicated in the resolutions themselves. For example: "28. *Resolved*, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same." "29. *Resolved*, never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made

that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession, which I cannot hope God will accept."

Jonathan Edwards's "Resolutions" show the principles and aims which constituted the foundation of his great and distinguished excellence, and may be studied with advantage by all who are likeminded with him. But it may be questioned whether such resolutions do not always fetter the free action of spiritual motives over the soul. That they usually burden the conscience is certain; that they promote steadfast holiness is doubtful.

The piety as well as philanthropy of JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY is well known. The most remarkable feature of his private memoranda when twenty years of age, is to be found, according to his biographer, in the anxiety which they manifest, that while study is pursued with regularity and diligence, the culture of the heart and the formation of moral and religious habits may ever be the first object of desire. With this view we find him accustomed to test himself by a series of heart-searching questions, often recording with humiliation a variety of faults, and at other times thankfully noting apparent improvement. The following will illustrate the general character of the questions. They are from an isolated page of the journal, headed "QUÆSTIONES NOCTURNÆ."

Joseph John Gurney; born in 1778; died in 1847.

"Have I this day been guarded in all my conversation, saying not one thing inconsistent with truth, purity, or charity?

"Have I felt love towards my neighbour?

"Have I done my part towards my own family?

"Have I been temperate in all respects, free from unlawful desires, habits, and anxieties?

"Have I been diligent in business? Have I given full time to effectual study?

"Have I admitted any other fear than that of God?

"Have I passed through the day in deep humility, depending constantly upon, and earnestly aspiring after, divine assistance?

"And have I in everything acted to the best of my knowledge according to the will of God?

"Have I worshipped him morning and evening?'

"This practice of self-examination," he writes in his autobiography, "was, I think, useful to me, and afterwards resulted in my keeping a regular journal, the writing of a perpetual letter to myself for my own private use. Thoroughly as I am aware of my own deficiencies, I may venture warmly to recommend to all my young friends the two practices to which I thus early habituated myself:—the reading of the Scriptures in the original languages, especially the New Testament, and the keeping of a private journal, chiefly with a view to close self-examination before Him who 'searcheth the reins and the heart,' and who will render to every one of us according to our works." "It is possible," his biographer remarks, "that in the early stages of his experience, there may have been, in the habitual use of these questions, somewhat of a bondage to form; but the honest diligence and earnestness which they manifest are highly instructive."

We do not much fear any "bondage" into which such honest self-examinations may lead an enlightened soul. Their effect will doubtless be frequent self-

abasement before God. But if the humbled spirit knows how to look for the sprinkling of atoning blood, it will receive peace in the midst of its humiliation, and along with peace a fresh stimulus to pursue the onward course. In order to these self-examinings being salutary, however, they must have reference, as in the case of Joseph John Gurney, to principle, and to the practical operation of principle rather than to emotional feeling.

The practice of recording the daily vicissitudes of Christian experience has the sanction of many eminent men. "I am convinced," wrote Henry Martyn, "that Christian experience is not a delusion: whether mine is so or not will be seen at the last day; and my object in making this journal is to accustom myself to self-examination, and to give my experience a visible form, so as to leave a stronger impression on the memory, and thus to improve my soul in holiness: for the review of such a lasting testimony will serve the double purpose of conviction and consolation."

A diary written wisely for these ends, or as recommended by Samuel Pearce, can scarcely be other than beneficial. "*Keep a diary*," he wrote to a young man who was preparing for the Christian ministry. "Once a week at farthest, call yourself to an account; what advances you have made in your different studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and amidst all, do not forget to inquire, Am I more fit to *serve* and to *enjoy* God than I was last week?"

But diaries degenerate too commonly into mere records of the ever-varying tides of feeling; and then

they become a snare. Frames and feelings are unduly magnified until they seem the whole or the more important part of Christian experience, and are mistaken for those affections and motives which are the true principles of action. The consequence is often found to be a species of spiritual self-torture which produces no fruits of holiness.

As a general rule, it will probably be found a wiser plan to do as recommended by John Foster in his essay "On a man's writing memoirs of himself,"—to review one's life (we should say periodically, or at least frequently), and endeavour not so much to enumerate the mere facts and events of life, as to discriminate the successive states of the mind, and so trace the progress of what may be called the character. "What I recommend," he says, "is to follow the order of time, and reduce your recollections, from the earliest period to the present, into as simple a statement and explanation as you can, of your feelings, opinions, and habits, and of the principal circumstances through each stage that have influenced them, till they have become at last what they now are. Whatever tendencies nature may justly be deemed to have imparted in the first instance, you would probably find the greater part of the moral constitution of your being composed of the contributions of many years and events, consolidated by degrees into what we call character; and, by investigating the progress of the accumulation, you would be assisted to judge more clearly how far the materials are valuable, the mixture congruous, and the whole conformation worthy to remain unaltered."

Such a review of the continuous formation of character, if executed faithfully and devoutly, cannot be

other than beneficial. It may lead to the discovery of evil influences which are working insidiously, and which are imperceptibly corrupting and undermining the good. It may stimulate to the more sedulous use of means which are found to be beneficial, and the more earnest cultivation of the varied graces of the Spirit.

There are specific means of spiritual progress, in reference to the propriety and efficacy of which no doubt can be entertained. And, in approaching the consideration of these, it is natural to inquire whether any trace can be discovered in the life of our Great Exemplar of any means that were used by him for the promotion of his spiritual life, or which, being used by him, did promote his spiritual life. We do not forget that he never needed "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Born sinless, and growing up sinless, repentance and conversion could form no part of his experience. But, although being sinless he was incapable of regeneration, we have seen that he was not incapable of progress. And it may be affirmed, at the least, that his increase in wisdom, and in all the gifts and graces which wisdom includes, was simultaneous with the constant study of the Holy Scriptures and the constant practice of prayer. And we are not too bold in adding that the one was the fruit of the other.

In the whole tale of the life of Christ we shall find no statement more mysterious than this, "It came to pass in those days, that Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God;"* or this, "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and

* Luke vi. 12.

pray yonder;"* "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed."†

The Son of God on his knees! It is the most mysterious position, save one, in which he was ever seen. Only believe him to be the Son of God, and the most extraordinary events of his life become the most natural. Studying the Gospels from this point of view, we are not surprised to be told of the miraculous manner of his birth. We are not surprised to hear of his turning water into wine, or multiplying a few loaves into the food of thousands. We are not surprised to find such records as the following:—"Great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel."‡ "The multitude wondered," and, looking at Jesus as they did, from the human side of his character alone, well they might: by the confession of all, "it was never so seen in Israel." But had they recognized an Incarnate God, they would not have wondered. The incarnation itself would then be the wonder; and the mighty works of the Incarnate One, even when most supernatural, would be held to be most natural. That the dead should obey the voice of the Son of God and live; that winds and waves should be subject to his word; that the spirits of hell should flee from the presence of his majesty and purity; all this we should look for almost as a matter of course. But the Son of God in poverty,

* Matthew xxvi. 36. † Luke xxii. 41.
‡ Matthew xv. 30, 31.

the Son of God in sorrow, the Son of God in tears, the Son of God in prayer—these are the true wonders in the life of Jesus Christ. And of these the last is perhaps the greatest.

We feel ourselves at once in a region of mystery, when we think of the Son of God in prayer. The divine and the human in the person of Jesus Christ,—how they were united, in what relations they subsisted towards each other,—"without controversy" great is this mystery. And the difficulty which is presented to the human understanding, whenever it dwells upon the twofold nature of Christ, is never brought into greater prominence than in connection with the fact that human prayer was offered by him who thought it no robbery to be equal with God. But let us not be guilty of the folly of attempting to solve a mystery that is confessedly too high for us, or of the folly of rejecting it because we cannot solve it. There is not a truer philosophy than that which says, in the words of Dr. Watts,

> "Where reason fails with all her powers,
> There faith prevails and love adores."

There is nothing more human in the life of Christ than prayer. "Prayer," it has been well said, "differences man from the creatures below and from the creatures above: it is the symbol of the fact, that on the one hand he is infinitely higher than all other mundane works of God; and that he has been made, on the other, a little lower than the angels." So that the prayers of Jesus Christ are a proof of his possessing a true human nature. If Christ truly prayed, then was he truly man. The weakness of infancy, and his growth in wisdom and stature, do not more clearly certify the humanity of Christ, than do the prayers of his riper years.

It is true that in connection with some of his prayers, and in the very language of others of them, the rays of his divine glory shine forth. The veil is not thick enough to hide the brightness of the majesty which it covers. When Jesus was "baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."* In this instance, while in the act of prayer, there was given a public and mysterious recognition of him as the well-beloved Son, the only begotten of the Father. In the well-known prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, Christ's very words are illuminated, so to speak, with the divine glory. While as a man he pleads with God, yet the very form of his pleading is instinct with the consciousness that he was more than man.

But there are prayers of our Lord in which the human element appears alone and exclusively—those especially that were offered on the eve of his betrayal, in the garden of Gethsemane. There he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death."† In Gethsemane we have a true man in mortal conflict with suffering and the prospect of suffering, constrained by the pressure which weighed down his human heart to cry for exemption from the bitter cup, and yet in this, as in all his trials, "without sin," submitting himself to the will of his Father.

We cannot but regard those long seasons of devotion which we read of in the life of Christ, as means of spiritual strength to his own human heart. When

* Luke iii. 21, 22. † Hebrews v. 7.

"he continued all night in prayer to God," many of his petitions were doubtless the petitions of the Great High Priest on behalf of his ransomed church. And prayers offered on the mountain side, or on the sea-shore of Galilee, may still be drawing down blessings on the world. But his protracted seasons of devotion were doubtless equally, if not chiefly, seasons of personal communion with his Father in heaven. His soul could not live without such communion. The most ardent longings of the regenerate heart after fellowship with the Father of spirits must be faint as compared with the longings of that heart which needed no regeneration; which had nothing in it that could clog its aspirations upward, or blunt its sense of the attractions which drew it Godward. Fellowship with God in prayer was thus a necessity of his pure nature. But not a necessity merely. It was a means of his spiritual progress and power. God gave "not the Spirit by measure unto him."* But does not the analogy of faith justify us in believing that the rich communications of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ were connected with his prayers? Is not this one of those things in which it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren?

It is instructive to observe, likewise, that Christ is represented as giving himself to special prayer in connection with the various emergencies of his life and the various stages of his ministry. Of no one could it ever be said with so much truth, that "all his works were begun, continued, and ended in God." His piety was not fitful, but habitual. His love to his Father and zeal for his Father's glory were not like the stream of the desert, now swollen by winter

* John iii. 34.

rains, and now dried up by summer heats, but like the mighty river whose waters flow in an unfailing volume. Never had he to confess lukewarmness, or imperfection, or corrupt taint in his motives. Never did he sink into a spiritual condition that should unfit him for any duty or for any emergency. And yet when special duty called, or special emergency was at hand, we find that he gave himself to special prayer. It was so before the choice or appointment of the apostles. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."* We cannot suppose that these two facts bore no relation to each other, but that of proximity in time. The selection and appointment of apostles to be his ambassadors to the world, and to lay the foundation of his church in the earth, was an act of the highest moment to his glory and to the future destinies of the world. And to us the fact that, in anticipation of it, the Lord from heaven retired to the solitude of a mountain, and spent a whole night in prayer, is fraught with solemn lessons. The Spirit which rested on these apostles even before the day of Pentecost, and the Spirit which descended on them more abundantly when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the successes which attended both their earlier and their later ministry, the faith which upheld them in times of temptation and of persecution, the graces which adorned their character, the gifts with which they were endowed—these may have been in a large measure an answer to the prayers of those solitary hours of the night which preceded their appointment.

* Luke vi. 12, 13.

Like Christ, we should be given habitually to prayer. The stream of our devotion should flow beside the stream of our activities; or, rather, the two should commingle their waters. But at the same time, in every occurrence, in every doing, in every suffering, that stands out from the common-place tenor of our life, we shall only be following Christ if we turn aside and give ourselves to special prayer. Whether the occurrence be purely personal, or whether it have relation to public affairs, the example of the Saviour instructs us to withdraw from labour and action, and give ourselves to prayer. At the throne of grace we shall obtain the wisdom and the strength, the power and the love, which the emergency, whether of duty or of trial, demands.

Of Christ's early devotion to that word which his own Spirit in the prophets had long before inspired, we have evidence in the only recorded incident of his life as a child—his interview with the doctors in the temple; and in the history of his temptation in the wilderness, in which he appealed three times to what "is written" in one of the books of the Old Testament. And how significant is the fact of Christ's early love of the Bible, and his early communion with its facts and thoughts! This is the book in which some men see but little divine glory, whose revelations partake too much of outwardness, and are cast in too human a mould. And yet this is probably the only book that ever furnished thought to the pure mind or addressed motive to the pure heart of the Son of God. His mother did as the book itself required: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou

sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* True it is that never before or since had human mother such a child for her pupil. But, wonderful as he was, he sat at the feet of that human mother, and heard from her lips the words of the law of her God, and was taught by her to unroll for himself the blessed volume, and trace its precious lines. From this book the child, the boy, drew spiritual nourishment, and increased in wisdom; and the man still loved the book on which the boy had fed.

Admit, then, that the constant study of the holy Scriptures and the constant habit of prayer were simultaneous with the progress of the sinless Jesus, and why should we hesitate to believe that they were the means of that progress, and that in this, made like unto his brethren, he has taught us how we may obtain spiritual strength and make spiritual advancement in gift and grace?

Christ's Bible was the Old Testament; and if his pure mind found nourishment and strength there, much more may we. As a book of devotion and experimental piety, it is most precious. "Where shall we find such noble examples of a faith which no difficulties could overcome; of a hope which no disaster could quench, no delays enfeeble; of a delight in God and God's service, which cast all other joys into the shade; and of a serene, abiding religiousness, which looked at all things on their Godward side, and kept the mind that was stayed on God in perfect peace amid all the tumults, and griefs, and shadows of time?

* Deuteronomy vi. 6, 7.

It makes one's heart strong to study them. It breaks up the sybarite effeminacy which, in seasons of tranquillity, is apt to invest our religious being, and it stirs us up to quit us like men in the never-ceasing spiritual warfare, to read how these men of the old time, amid the twilight of their dispensation, strengthened each other and themselves in the Lord, and fought their way through to 'the city which hath foundations,' where they now rest and reign. Most certain is it that, in all times of peculiar danger or darkness, it is to these ancient Scriptures that the church instinctively turns for consolation and for vigour. Most certain is it that all men of strong and deep minds find a peculiar pleasure in the perusal of these writings, and acknowledge in them something to which their own souls cling with a vivid sympathy. Most certain is it that, of those who have borne or achieved great things for the cause of God, the greater part were wont to feed their spiritual energies at the banquet which these provide. It is not safe to neglect such experiences. If we do, we may soon find nothing left to us but to mourn over the days that are gone, and say, 'Our silver is become dross, our wine is mixed with water.'"

Were the secret history of illustrious Christians brought to light, we should find, probably without exception, not only that the word of God occupied a large place in their regard, but that it was the especial means of grace which they used and prized. On the announcement of the death of General Havelock, the following communication was made to a public journal: —"It may interest your readers to be told that, even on such arduous service as the Affghan campaign and

the siege of Jellalabad, Havelock invariably secured two hours in the morning for reading the Scriptures and for private prayer. If the march began at six, he rose at four; if at four, he rose at two. Is it any wonder that he was raised up as a deliverer of our people, almost like one of the judges of Israel?" And we may add, is it any wonder that, in circumstances the most adverse and trying to Christian principle and holiness, he was enabled to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour, and constrain men to reverence a faith which they did not love?

A hundred years before the days of Havelock, another brave soldier preserved and promoted his spiritual life by means remarkably similar. The circumstances which attended the conversion of Colonel Gardiner, and the decisiveness of the change itself, are better known than the beauty and completeness of the Christian character which he afterwards attained. For a considerable time after his conversion, Colonel Gardiner felt the deep emphasis of those well-chosen words in which the apostle Paul ranks the trial of cruel mockings with scourgings and bonds and imprisonments. "I am obliged to dispute every inch of the ground," he wrote to the pious mother, whose heart had often been wrung by his wicked courses, but was now filled with gratitude and joy; "but, all thanks and praise to the great Captain of my salvation, he fights for me; and then it is no wonder that I come off more than conqueror."

The secret of his steadfastness, of his rapid progress, and of his high attainments, is to be found in the habits of devotion and of Bible reading which he formed at the commencement of his religious history,

and which he continued throughout life. It was his custom to rise at four in the morning, and to spend two hours in reading, meditation, and prayer. If at any time he was obliged to go out before six in the morning, he rose proportionably earlier; so that when a journey or a march required him to be on horseback by four, he would be at his devotions at furthest by two. And to those resolute habits of self-denial may well be ascribed his growth in grace.

Sarah Martin, the humble seamstress, who has so worthily acquired the title of "the Yarmouth philanthropist," hated no book as she hated the Bible, before her conversion to God. She hated it partly because she feared it. If a ray of gospel light came across her mind in any way, she turned from it, she says, as from a reptile. The Bible in the hands of her grandmother was a daily terror to her. Two Bibles, which had been her mother's, she removed from their place and hid, that they might not meet her eyes; and this she did with the idea that, should the Bible after all prove true, the less she knew of it the better it would be for her. But in proportion to this aversion to the Bible was her after-love to it. It was the great fountain of her knowledge and of her power. For many years she read it through five times every year; and she formed a most exact reference-book to its contents. Her intimate familiarity with its striking imagery and lofty diction impressed a poetical character upon her own style, and filled her mind with exalted thoughts.

Above all, she applied its truths and lessons to herself, and that in a manner worthy of universal imitation. "The advantage of resorting to the Bible, in circum-

stances of trial or difficulty, for minute direction and sure guidance has been," she wrote, "as life against death to me. And oft, when my strong impetuosity of feeling and my impatience before God have arisen before an evil, when anger would have assumed the place of patient, enduring love, and when my own sins before God became greater than that which was to be deplored and reproved by me in another, then this divine and perfect book, whilst it supplied and still supplies correction, ever told of mercy." To one who complained, "I make no progress in my Christian course," she replied, "Take your Bible on your knees, plough into it, and you will not stand still."

One of the first effects of the conversion of Thomas Chalmers was his regular and earnest study of the Bible. An old and privileged friend, visiting him before the great change, said to him on one occasion, "I find you aye busy, sir, with one thing or another; but, come when I may, I never find you at your studies for the Sabbath." "Oh! an hour or two on the Saturday evening is quite enough for that," was the answer. But when Chalmers's heart was turned to God, this old friend often found him poring eagerly over the pages of the Bible. The difference was too striking to escape notice, and his friend remarked, "I never come in now, sir, but I find you aye at your Bible!" "All too little, John, all too little," was the significant reply.

From the beginning of his religious course, Mr. Chalmers was sensitively afraid, we are told by his biographer, lest the truth, as God had revealed it, should come to him distorted or mutilated, because coming in the form in which it was presented by

human systems or in theological controversies. "The primary and most earnest effort was to derive his Christianity immediately from the Divine Oracles, to lay his whole being broadly open, to take off from the sacred page the exact and the full impression of divine truth in the very forms and proportions in which it was there set forth." His correspondence and journals bear ample testimony to this fact.

"If we ask what most characterizes the Scriptures," says Mr. Douglas of Cavers, "it is thought. As the Bible is the book of books, so its contents are the thought of thoughts, demanding, provoking, supplying thought without end. Such we might well suppose to be its character, considering its Author. God is a Spirit; and thought is the action of spirit, and the purest product of mind. But thought is a high exercise; painful to our low and earthly faculties, and readily dispensed with where not absolutely necessary. And hence men favour classes who think for them, both with respect to their temporal and spiritual affairs. And hence religious writings are more read than the Scriptures themselves, because here the effort has been surmounted by others; the thoughts are already expanded, and the feelings educed which the meditations upon passages of Scripture were suited to inspire. It is true, the feelings which are merely the reflection of the feelings of others are not so valuable as the original impressions; and nothing can compensate for the painful but salutary effort of evolving truth for ourselves. Still, the union of thinking for ourselves, and profiting by the thoughts of others, will jointly produce the most profitable results; and they who meditate mostly upon the Bible will

most value and best appreciate the meditations of others."

At the same time it is, and will for ever remain true, that they who "meditate most upon the Bible" will be the highest, holiest, devoutest class of Christians. It is said that if a grape-vine be planted in the neighbourhood of a well, its roots, running secretly underground, wreathe themselves in a network around the cold, clear waters; and the vine's putting on outward greenness and unwonted clusters and fruit, is all that tells where every root and fibre of its being has been silently stealing. Even such is the fruitfulness of those who are in constant spiritual communion with the fountain of life. "Blessed is the man

> Whose delight is in the law of the Lord;
> And in his law doth meditate day and night.
> He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
> That bringeth forth his fruit in his season:
> His leaf also shall not wither;
> And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

George Wagner; born January 18, 1818; died Feb. 10, 1857.

The Rev. GEORGE WAGNER presents a beautiful example of the commingling of prayer with all the duties and occupations of life. On the approach of his first great college examination at Cambridge, in 1839, we find him expressing a holy jealousy over his heart in these words:—"My mind is in a frightfully nervous state, thinking of examinations and the attainment of human learning, instead of being calm and composed, and resting upon Jesus." Again:—"Much spiritual blindness: I fear that reading for examination is a very deadening thing. But I hope, by the grace of God, that I shall soon be raised from this sorrowful state, and delivered from so great temptations, and be

enabled to worship God in an humble and quiet spirit."

The examination came; and beautiful was the preparation of heart with which this devoted Christian student entered upon what he felt at once to be a duty and a snare. "Got up at half-past five, dressed, read the Bible, and prayed until seven. Went to chapel, and enjoyed it more than usual. After chapel, prayed and read the Bible until eight. Read Euclid, and went in to the examination in a confused state. This is the first day. Have not done well; my body has not been well, and there is every sign of breaking down before it is over. Prayed before and after dinner. This evening my mind jaded. Lord, pardon my manifold infirmities, and grant that I may do all things to thy glory. By the tender mercy of God, have not suffered much from ambition. Shall be thankful when it is over. Lord, grant that my mind may be stayed upon thee, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

And again a few days after:—"My mind far too much occupied with this examination. Prayed before and after dinner. . . . This evening my mind dreadfully distracted. My private tutor has just been in, talking about algebra. How happy shall I be when all is over! How trifling are these things of time compared with eternity; and yet how the mind dwells on them and magnifies them! Lord, graciously look down upon me, and purify and make me holy, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

His life at home was governed by the same strict rules as those which he imposed on himself at college. He resolutely maintained the practice of early rising, as early as five o'clock when circumstances allowed it; and the time thus redeemed he consecrated to prayer

and the study of the Bible. "I ought to secure two hours at least for these purposes," he says, "before my day begins." And as the day began, so it continued. "Pray always *five* times a day," is the resolution he records, "at regular times, besides when moved to it."

What is called "ejaculatory prayer" will be found of great spiritual benefit. "If prayer is the breath of the spiritual life," says the author of "Preces Paulinæ," "then it follows that our devotional acts should be of almost momently recurrence, and not long-drawn respirations to be followed by a deathly or trance-like stillness." We have indeed at stated times to climb the mount of communion, and there inhale the refreshing breezes of a purer atmosphere; but as we tread our pathway through the vale of ordinary duty, we must be ever breathing out our desires, and drawing in our needed supplies of grace. We may not limit ourselves to ejaculatory petitions, but neither may we neglect them. Our more prolonged devotions are necessary to the life of our soul; but that life will manifest itself in our briefer supplications, our more cursory entreaties for pardon and guidance.

> "These form the links of an electric chain,
> That join the orisons of morn and eve,
> And propagate through all its several parts,
> While kept continuous, the ethereal fire."

"To me," says Dr. Pye Smith, "it appears that the grand means of maintaining happy cheerfulness, in union with that penitent humiliation which we should ever preserve, is the habit of early but prompt intercourse with God through the divine Mediator, by thought and ejaculation, rejoicing in God through our

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement."

The importance of the right use of the Sabbath, and of the appointed ordinances of religion, as means of spiritual strength and progress, is too obvious to need much remark. Some indeed are disposed to plead the *habitual* cultivation of piety as an apology for lowering the Sabbath to the level of other days. But such persons do not understand either the urgencies of their own hearts, or the wisdom of God in making provision for them. The testimony of Sir Matthew Hale, William Wilberforce, and others, to the value of the Christian Sabbath as a means of grace, has been often quoted. These good men guarded this blessed institution sacredly from the intrusion of the world and of politics, and found in it a fountain of spiritual refreshment and mental invigoration. Of Henry Martyn, whose employments were all in a sense spiritual, and who might therefore be regarded as less dependent on Sabbath privileges, his biographer says: "The Sabbath, that sacred portion of time set apart for holy purposes in paradise itself, was so employed by him as to prove frequently a paradise to his soul on earth; and as certainly prepared him for an endless state of spiritual enjoyment hereafter."

In the Christian life, "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." He has "joined" truth and love, law and freedom; but men often "put them asunder." Truth, without love, is "dead, being alone;" love, without truth, is mere worthless sentiment. Law, obeyed without that spirit of freedom

which pardoning mercy imparts, is bondage; a freedom that shall be independent of law degenerates into self-will and license.

In his early spiritual struggles, John Wesley resorted to the mystic writers, "whose noble descriptions of union with God and of internal religion," he says, "made everything else appear mean, flat, and insipid. But, in truth, they made good works appear so too, yea, and faith itself; and what not? These gave me," he says, "an entire new view of religion, nothing like any I had before. But, alas! it was nothing like that religion which Christ and his apostles lived and taught. I had a plenary dispensation from all the commands of God; the form ran thus: 'Love is all; all the commands besides are only means of love; you must choose those which you feel are means to you, and use them as long as they are so.' Thus were all the bands burst at once. And though I could never fully come into this, nor contentedly omit what God enjoined, yet I know not how I fluctuated between obedience and disobedience. I had no heart, no vigour, no zeal in obeying; continually doubting whether I was right or wrong, and never out of perplexities and entanglements."

There are those who, though not professedly mystics, would substitute love for law, instead of making it the motive to the obedience of law, or would set aside positive commands on the ground of their being superseded by the one higher command of love. Outward ordinances, especially, are, in the esteem of such persons, mere dead things,—material, carnal. Christians should be too spiritual, too heavenly, to make them of any account. But not so thought Christ, and his example has made provision, by prophetic

anticipation, against this error. He performed every duty that was prescribed by God, whether in the moral law or in the peculiar institutes of the Mosaic law "under" which "he was born." When an infant, he received the initiatory ordinance of Judaism. He was "redeemed," according to the law, as the "first-born" of his mother, though himself the Redeemer of the world. It can scarcely be doubted that he presented every offering that was required of an Israelite, though himself the propitiatory and Paschal Lamb, the archetype and substance of all the shadows of Judaism. He visited the synagogue, and learned and taught there, though himself the "truth." He entered the temple, and worshipped there, though himself greater than the temple,—the human shrine of the Eternal God. The ministry of John the Baptist, under which the old dispensation passed into the new, received at his hands the like honour; and standing humbly before the servant of God, he asked baptism, although he needed no repentance, saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."* Christ's followers must be more spiritual than Christ himself, before it will become them to do otherwise. Faith invariably produces obedience to the will of God in whatsoever that will is known to require. Holy works are its never-failing fruits. "They are no less necessary to its health, growth, and vigour, than motion to that of the body; and like leaves they feed and strengthen the life they spring from."

Blessed be God for a divine example which thus meets us at every point of our spiritual course, and

* Matthew iii. 15.

teaches us where and how to walk. In following Christ whithersoever he goeth, we are haunted by no fear that we may be doing the thing that is wrong. We can sit at his feet; we can go with him into solitude and into society; we can observe him when he communes with God, and when he deals with man; we can watch his lips and his emotions when he stands face to face with friend and with foe, with no misgiving that possibly we may be led astray by the unreserved surrender of ourselves to the guidance of his example. If we learn to feel as he feels, and to speak as he speaks, and to act as he acts, being Christ-like, we shall be God-like. His words and acts are "the true stars which stand fast in the heavens," and by whose calm and unchanging light we are led onward from well-doing to well-doing in the way to God and to glory.

"Lord, as to thy dear cross we flee,
And plead to be forgiven,
So let thy life our pattern be,
And form our souls for heaven.

"Help us, through good report and ill,
Our daily cross to bear;
Like thee, to do our Father's will,
Our brethren's grief to share.

"Let grace our selfishness expel,
Our earthliness refine,
And kindness in our bosoms dwell,
As free and true as thine.

"Kept peaceful in the midst of strife,
Forgiving and forgiven;
Oh may we lead the pilgrim's life,
And follow thee to heaven."

CHAPTER II.

THE WORLD'S WORK.

CONTENTS.—Is it compatible with the divine life?—Natural similitudes—Testimony of Scripture—Monasticism—Christ's infancy—True idea of Christ's private human life—Did he work with his own hands?—Significance of the occasion of his first miracle—Alleged asceticism of John the Baptist—Apostolic forewarnings—Conclusions—Enoch—the patriarchs and their discipline—Daniel—Wilberforce—The profession of arms—Hedley Vicars—General Havelock—Common soldiery—Toil and care a spiritual discipline—Extracts from Caird and Whewell.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
ROMANS xii. 11.

"Religion is not so much *a* duty, as a something that has to do with *all* duties; not a tax to be paid periodically and got rid of at other times, but a ceaseless, all-pervading, inexhaustible tribute to Him who is not only the object of religious worship, but the end of our very life and being. Piety is not for Sundays only, but for all days; spirituality of mind is not appropriate to one set of actions and an impertinence and intrusion with reference to others; but, like the act of breathing, like the circulation of the blood, like the silent growth of the stature, a process that may be going on simultaneously with all our actions; when we are busiest as when we are idlest; in the church, in the world; in solitude, in society; in our grief and in our gladness; in our toil and in our rest; sleeping, waking; by day, by night —amidst all the engagements and exigencies of life."

REV. JOHN CAIRD.

THE WORLD'S WORK.

THE world's work and the divine life! Are these contrary the one to the other? If by necessity or otherwise they are brought into contact in the same person, is their contact one of mutual forbearance merely, or may it grow into an alliance of friendship and mutual help? Is the world's work done best apart from the divine life? Is the divine life safest and strongest apart from the world's work? On the answer that is given to these questions will depend the entire structure and complexion of our practical Christianity. One answer will lead us to "flee from man and man's pursuits," and betake ourselves to a monastic seclusion, from which, at a distance, we shall pity the world and hear the murmur of its busy sounds, but not touch it, lest we be defiled. A different answer will not only allow but constrain us to go into the thickest of its society, and the commonest of its labours, believing that even there we shall be subjected to no necessary defilement, but may serve God in all well-pleasing.

Two streams, especially if in rapid motion, may flow side by side for many a mile without mingling their waters. It is so with the Mississippi and Missouri, the line of meeting between whose waters may be traced for miles below the junction of the two rivers. It is so with the Gulf Stream, whose waters preserve a distinctive character, as they sweep along through

the Atlantic, like a stream of oil in the ocean, for three thousand miles It is so with the shallow Arve and the majestic Rhone. The Rhone flows from the Genevan Lake, clear as crystal; the Arve flows from the "restless grinding glaciers," muddy, and cold as death. Descending from its mountain birthplace, the Arve rushes into the Rhone at right angles, as if in haste to mingle its noisy current with the waters of the lake river; but the Rhone repels its advance, and rushes on by itself. And thus the two rivers flow on without mingling, the cold mud on the one side, and the clear crystal on the other. "The Arve is the child of night and frost," to use the words of Dr. Cheever, "while the Rhone is the daughter of the day and of sunshine."

Now, are these true symbols of the world's work and of the life of God in man's soul? And are these the only fit relations which they can sustain to each other?

Let the appeal be made to Holy Scripture, and such questions are soon answered. The relations and the labours of life are not only tolerated there, but distinctly sanctioned. What Socrates is said to have done in philosophy, the inspired writers have done in religion; they have brought it down from heaven to earth. We find them now prostrate in adoration before the throne of God, and, overwhelmed with the profound mystery of his being and of his works, exclaiming, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* And then we find them enforcing a comprehensive and manly regard to all present, personal, and social duty. They inculcate

* Romans xi. 33.

the transcendant importance of what is spiritual, and say, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* And then they insist on earthly claims, and place them under the highest sanctions of the Christian faith: "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."† Let men abandon work on a religious pretext, as did certain Thessalonians, and apostles are at once prepared to command, on divine authority, that "if any will not work, neither shall he eat."‡

The verdict of these divinely guided men on the social relationship of life is equally clear. And we associate the relationships of the world and the work of the world, because they involve and imply each other. When the latter is repudiated as unholy, so are the former. But what saith the Scripture? Its testimony, full and explicit, will be found in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Marriage, instead of being less holy than celibacy, is with the writers of Scripture the chosen sign of the spiritual union which subsists between Christ and his people; and its duties are inculcated by the highest considerations which the mysteries of the gospel can suggest. It is not necessary that we measure and define the exact force of every word in this Scripture, in order to see in it a standing and conclusive argument against monasticism. Its strength and its minuteness leave nothing to be desired. The married woman, instead of being in a less holy condition than the unmarried,

* Colossians iii. 1, 2. † 1 Timothy v. 8.
‡ 2 Thessalonians iii. 10.

is the apostolic symbol of the church of Christ, when presented to him in stainless glory, beyond the reach of all earthly defilement. The married man, instead of being in a less holy state than the unmarried, exercises in that state an authority which is the symbol of Christ's authority over his church. The love of the husband to the wife, and the tenderness with which he cherishes her, are not of the earth earthy, but find their ideal and their highest motive in the tender love of Christ to his church—the love which has redeemed her, the love which cherishes her, and which will not be content till it has robed her in unsullied and unchanging purity. The duties of the relationship are not to be discharged as a low necessity, but as "unto the Lord." And the relation, once entered upon, is indissoluble. This is apostolic teaching; but what says monasticism?

Monasticism has not only drawn the unmarried to its cells and solitudes, but has dared to give dispensation to the married to forsake each other for its higher and holier life, thus making void the law which God enacted in the beginning, which Christ confirmed by his express authority, and which furnished the apostle Paul with his best illustration of the indissolubleness and the intimacy of the union between the Saviour and the saved. As if prophetically to anticipate this presumption, and to lift up a standard against it, the apostle not only repeats the law of paradise, but asserts its obligation on every "individual;"—"Let every one of you *in particular* (individually) so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."* "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder,"† is the divine law.

* Ephesians v. 33. † Matthew xix. 6.

"You *may* break it asunder," the monastery says, "if you only do it for me." "Husbands, love your wives; wives, reverence your husbands,"* the law says. "Husbands, you may forsake your wives; wives, you may forsake your husbands," the monastery says, "if you only do it for me." The law and the monastery, then, cannot both be of God. And we are not surprised to find the prohibition of marriage, of which the "Spirit spoke expressly" as one of the characteristics of "latter times," described as a departure from the faith, and the product of seducing spirits.†

The duties of rulers and subjects, of masters and servants, of parents and children, are all described and enforced on the same page with the duties of husbands and wives. The existence and permanence of those relations are presupposed. And not only is their lawfulness implied, but their obligations are placed under the sanction of the one great Christian principle of "doing every thing unto the Lord." What otherwise might be mean and earthly is thus ennobled and exalted by its alliance with the spirit of heaven.

Christians, it is true, are solemnly charged to come out from among unbelievers, and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing.‡ But that the separation is to be a moral separation, practised in the very midst of the world's society and pursuits, is the express assertion of the apostle who commands it. "I enjoined you in my letter not to keep company with fornicators; yet, I meant not altogether to bid you forego intercourse with the men of this world who may be fornicators, or lascivious, or extortioners, or idolaters; for so you would be forced to go utterly

* Ephesians v. 25. 33. † 1 Timothy iv. 1—3.
‡ 2 Corinthians vi. 17.

out of the world. But my meaning was that you would not keep company with any man who, bearing the name of a brother, is either a fornicator, or lascivious, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a man, I say, you must not so much as eat."* The "going out of the world" in order to avoid contact with its evils was a thing not to be thought of, according to this apostle; and any construction put on his words which implied such an issue, must be, Paul himself intimates, utterly wrong. Christians are not to flee from the presence of the ungodly, or decline the intercourse which their occupations necessitate; while at the same time they are not to acknowledge the brotherhood of the wicked, or choose them for the friends of their heart. It is not a local or social separation, but a moral and spiritual, that the apostle enjoins, when he says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."†

To sustain our argument, it is not necessary to appeal to the practical corruptions and abuses of the monastic system, and to show how, founded on vows of poverty and celibacy, monastic orders have acquired wealth and practised habits of the grossest self-indulgence and licentiousness. Nor is it necessary to deny the incidental advantages which, in certain circumstances, have accrued to society from their existence. Their principle is fundamentally wrong. The

* 1 Corinthians v. 9—11. This translation by Mr. Conybeare may help the reader to a clearer perception of the force of the passage.

† Romans xii. 1, 2.

better the man who sought in them a refuge from the chaos and turbulence of the world, the more was he needed in the world. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" said "the still small voice" to the fugitive prophet in his hiding-place in Mount Horeb. "What hast THOU, of all men, to do here? Thou, whose post in my service is among the haunts of men, to fight my battles against a perverse generation, and to strengthen the hearts of those who still encourage themselves in the Lord their God; what hast thou to do in this selfish, moaning solitude? what hast thou to do *here?*"

> "Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast
> Thy bread upon the waters; sure, at last,
> In joy to find it after many days."

This notion, however, with its invariable associate, asceticism, is deeply rooted in our nature. It has grafted itself on all the religions of the world, true and false. Judaism was not proof against it; Christianity has been corrupted by it; and both the creeds and the rituals of heathendom are steeped in it. But it is utterly opposed to the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Centuries after his departure from the world, the history of his infancy and childhood was overloaded with legends, which originated in a spirit of blindness that could not perceive the beauty of the human and natural elements of his life. And the Bible picture of his childhood is so *human*, in the truest and purest sense, that even the most enlightened thinkers can scarcely fill up the outline without introducing, in their desire to magnify him, features that are not in keeping with the original. When the poet of "Paradise Regained," for example, represents the Lord as recalling in the wilderness the inward communings of his boyhood, and saying—

"Above my years,
The law of God I read and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight and in it grew
To such perfection, that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at one great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own."

we consent to the fitness of the meditation. But when he proceeds to say—

"Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deed
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman Yoke;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed and equity restored,"

we consent to the comment of one who says—"High resolves, no doubt, worthy of a hero, but only of a hero; it is ourselves magnified, but only magnified: the peculiar element of St. Luke's picture is gone."

Now, what is that picture? Christ's birth was attended by special forthcomings of divine power and majesty, which attested his glory as the Son of God. But we pass these by, and find him a human child, with all a child's dependence, bodily and mental, under the care of Joseph and Mary, in the despised Galilean town of Nazareth. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, he accompanied them. This is the only circumstance that is recorded of the first thirty years of his life; and in the record there is one sentence which lifts the veil from his humanity; "one sentence which differences the history of Christ from any thing that could have been reported of the life of any other man." It is that which contains the words of Christ to his mother:—"How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's

business?" or "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Either way, in the mysterious reference to his *Father*, we see a ray of the divine glory breaking through the veil behind which his majesty for the most part lay concealed. With this exception, "the tale in no way transcends ordinary experience. The child missed—the parent's alarm—the return to Jerusalem—the search for him in the city—the discovery of him in the temple with the doctors—the reproach of the mother—the submission and return of the son; all these circumstances, constituting as they do a tale of deep interest, do yet contain no single feature that is not purely human." And this peep into the manner of his human life is most instructive and most precious. That child, whose understanding and answers astonished the doctors and other worshippers in the temple, and who claimed a mysterious relationship to God as his Father, returned to the bosom of the humble family to which he belonged at Nazareth, and "was subject" still, as he had been before, to Joseph and Mary. The honour thus put on the great sacred bond of human society is fatal to the claims of the monastery and the desert to be considered the scene of a higher and holier life than men can lead in the midst of domestic duties. Living in the family of Joseph the carpenter, and sharing in its toils, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*

"Sharing in its toils," we have said. The question of the people, "Is not this the carpenter?"† *may* have been asked because he belonged to a carpenter's family. But the most natural interpretation of it is, that he was himself known to follow the

* Luke ii. 52. † Mark vi. 3.

carpenter's occupation. And why should we shrink from believing it? Because it was beneath him? *There was nothing beneath him but sin.* If it was not beneath him to become man, it could not be beneath him to do man's work.

We only dishonour the Saviour by supposing that while under the humble roof of Joseph, and, after Joseph's death, that of his own loved and widowed mother, he folded his arms and lived a life of dependence on others, himself absorbed in meditation—a life which to his neighbours could appear only as that of an idle dreamer. That he wrought no miracle to supply his family's wants, we know; and that he was "subject to his parents," we know. Now among the Jews it was considered, at that period, incumbent on a father to bring up his son in some art or trade. And it is the saying of an eminent rabbi, that "Whosoever teacheth not his son to do some work, is as if he taught him robbery." Jesus assuredly, occupying the place of a poor man's son, would not eat the bread of idleness. If any one had suggested that he should be exempt from the obligation common to others, his reply would have been, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

We confess, indeed, to a sentiment of wonder at the spectacle presented to us in that carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the Son of God in human nature earning his bread with the sweat of his brow. But it is only a part of the great wonder of God incarnate; and while we wonder and adore, we bless him that herein he has left us an example that we should follow his steps: "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." There are times when rebel thoughts arise. Toil, we imagine, is beneath us.

What men have proudly called "the strong divinity of soul" stirs within our bosoms, and makes us conscious of a mind that is capable of rising to a knowledge of God and of his universe, seen and unseen; and our hearts question, "Shall such an one as I, with a soul allied to the nature of God himself, work all my days in clay and wood, in iron and brass?" The question may take another form. "Redeemed from among men, made a child of God and an heir of heaven, living on the very confines of glory, is it meet that I should be doomed to a life of perpetual toil, and that in connection with the meanest of earth's mean affairs?" The early Christians, just emerging from the shades of ignorance, and awakened by new hopes, were in great danger of being led away by such imaginations as these. Feeling an elevation to which they were strangers before, and looking down upon the world around them as the vassals of sin and Satan, they might be easily tempted to imagine the restraint of laws could not extend to persons so highly privileged, and that it was ignominious in the freemen of Jesus Christ to submit to the yoke of idolatrous rulers. Hence probably the bold and emphatic terms in which apostles inculcated subjection to earthly ordinances, "for conscience sake." The yoke of manual labour and physical toil is likewise to be borne "for conscience sake;" and if we need ought to reconcile us to it, there is enough in the fact that it was borne both by the first and by the second Adam. The first, yet perfect, the image of God still untarnished, while earth and heaven were in unbroken fellowship, and God himself was the friendly visitor of his earthly child—the unfallen Adam—was placed in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. The

second, the Lord from heaven, not only sinless man, but incarnate God, spent his days not in the king's palace, nor in the philosopher's school, nor in the hermit's solitude, but in the carpenter's shop. We need not that the orator or the poet should tell us of the dignity of labour; or the economist, of its necessity; or the casuist, of its lawfulness. One visit to Nazareth, and we see it all. "It is enough that the disciple be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord."

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" said Christ, in explanation of what seemed mysterious to his parents—his converse with the doctors in the temple. They are his first recorded words; and his last before his death are like them—"It is finished." These sayings may be regarded as the moral boundaries of his life, the one at the beginning, the other at the end. He began life by saying that he "must be about his Father's work;" he ended life by saying that his Father's work was accomplished. Now there was nothing in all that life of his that did not form a part of his Father's work. Our minds naturally revert to the glorious teaching of the mount of Beatitudes, the glorious miracles that were wrought by his word, and the still more glorious sacrifice which he offered on Calvary, and say, "These formed his Father's business." But not these alone: there was not the smallest thread in the whole web of his life that was not put there "according to his Father's will." He was in his right place in the workshop as well as in the temple. He was doing the right thing when he was obeying the parents of the Nazarene family, as well as when he was commanding the winds and the waves. When with a human heart and human hands he held his

place for thirty years in the domestic circle, and shared its toils and cares, he was doing his Father's will as certainly as during those three years that were spent in the open manifestation of his divine Sonship, and in the direct accomplishment of the world's redemption. In his public life he stands alone; in its mysterious grandeur and peculiar aims he can be followed by neither man nor angel. But in his private life, covering by far the larger space in his earthly sojourn, he is the example of all. Whether they plough the land or plough the sea, wield the hammer or wield the pen, do the work of a master or the work of a servant, they have only to do all "as unto the Lord," and it will be acknowledged as *their* Father's business. And in the midst of it, and of the society of the world which it necessitates, they may be as Jesus was, still "separate from sinners."

The after-life of Jesus, though devoted to other labours than those of the family and the workshop, teaches the same lesson. His first miracle was performed at a marriage feast, and in aid of the marriage festivities—a circumstance which has often occasioned wonder, but which is instinct with meaning. That he should have chosen a marriage feast for beginning to "manifest forth his glory" was not the result of accident; nor can we reverently imagine it possible that in any sense the choice was inconsiderate or unintentional.

With the history of the church before us, we see in it a prophetic protest against the ascetic habits and monastic vows which have claimed to themselves a higher religious character than can belong to the relations and pursuits of common life. We see in his miracle more than an act of kindness to the indi-

viduals whose nuptials were celebrated in that cottage home in Cana of Galilee; we see in it the rendering of transcendent honour to that state which was "instituted of God in the time of man's innocence." The English marriage-service does not exaggerate the import of Christ's act when it says—"Which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought." The Founder of the kingdom of heaven on earth did not begin his work by teaching his followers to break every tie of earthly kindred, and neglect every earthly duty, and flee into solitudes, where they might live the life avowedly of saints, but more truly of worms or of wild beasts. He laid the foundation of his kingdom in that humble household for whose benefit he turned water into wine. Then and there did he claim the family as the first and special sphere for the growth and exercise of the Christian graces and virtues. And the existence of families involves the existence of all the other relations of life, with all their duties and labours. The whole fabric of society rests on the family, and instead of dissolving society, the Christ of God claimed it as the scene of his spiritual reign, to be purified and pervaded by the holy principles of his gospel. Human connections and interests and joys were not abandoned to the princedom of his rival, the devil, but taken possession of for the glory of God. The social life of man was not destroyed, but sanctified by the Lord from heaven.

The same truth and lesson are taught by the words in which Christ chid the inconsistency of the Jews. "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drink-

ing; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."* In fulfilment of his vow as a Nazarite, John drank no wine. In harmony with his mission as a minister of "repentance," and with his condition as a poor man, he was clad in a dress which may still be seen every day in Syro-Arabia,—a rough robe of camel's hair, bound about the waist with a leathern girdle. In preparation for his great work, he lived for a time in the wilderness, and was content with such food as the wilderness supplied — locusts and wild honey. From his desert home, where he communed with nature in its wildest aspects, and still more, with the God of nature, the God of Israel, he looked towards the towns and cities of Judea, saw and brooded over their corruptions, and nursed the thoughts and feelings which these awakened, until the time of his appearing to Israel arrived. In all this there was no asceticism. It was only in keeping with the peculiar character of his work, and admirably preparatory for it. But even if in a very modified sense John's manner of life be called ascetic, Christ's may not. And *his* is the true model of the Christian life. The charge against him, "Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber," was false, and was not believed, even by those who made it; but the fact on which it was based, and which Pharisaic enmity perverted into a crime, was admitted by himself: "He came eating and drinking." He did not cultivate an ascetic piety in the seclusion of an oratory, or in the solitude of a desert, but "received sinners, and ate with them;" and while he did so, he was "holy, harmless, and undefiled." He was "separate from sinners" in the way in which

* Luke vii. 33, 34.

he wills his followers to be, even when he mingled in their society, and ate at their tables. If John's manner of life be declared the prototype of the ascetic, Christ must be regarded as the type of the Christian. The lesson which was conveyed by his first miracle at Cana was confirmed by his whole after-life—a life which, while it was the purest ever lived on earth, was spent in social intercourse with mankind, and amid the common pursuits of the world.

The Christian life, as it appears in the writings of the apostles, was the life of parents and children, of masters and servants, of rulers and subjects, of buyers and sellers—a life spent in cities, not in solitudes—in the workshop and the market-place, not in cells and cloisters. These writings, moreover, contain a solemn protest against the ascetic practices whose encroachments began even in the apostolic times, and whose growing pretensions the prophetic spirit distinctly foresaw. "Since with Christ ye have died off from the rudiments of the world, why, as yet living in the world, do ye suffer such ordinances to be published among you as 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' in reference to things which are meant to perish in the use—ordinances which have no higher authority than the commandments and the doctrines of men? which procedure, indeed, having a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in anything of value, only ministers to the gratification of the flesh."* "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits . . . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,

* Colossians ii. 20—23.

which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving."* The whole phenomenon of asceticism, inclusive of its self-chosen austerities and its abandonment of the relations and duties of social life, is "a huge self-deception, and a reversal of that moral order which God has established."

We are now prepared to assert, and to illustrate by examples, the following positions :—

FIRST. The world's labour and the heart's piety may co-exist in the same person, each in the highest and intensest degree—sure sign that, at the least, there is no natural repugnance between them, and that they are not hostile the one to the other.

SECOND. The highest motives which Christian piety can supply may be brought to bear on the discharge of the labours connected with the world's work, and with the duties of our social relationships.

THIRD. Those labours and duties may become the means of nurturing and strengthening the virtues and graces of the Christian character.

> "We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
> Our neighbour and our work farewell;
> * * * * * *
> Each trivial round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we ought to ask;
> Room to deny ourselves; a road
> To bring us daily nearer God."

Enoch "walked with God," but not in a state of separation from society and the common work of man. He was not an ascetic or recluse. "He married," says the Rev. W. Jay, quaintly but truly, "earlier than any of his patriarchal brethren, and had sons and daughters. It is not the religion of the Bible that drives men into caves and dens of the earth,

* 1 Timothy iv. 1, 3.

or that teaches them to counteract the destinations of Providence, or to oppose the nature that God has given them. Is a wretched, dronish monk in his cell, with his horse-hair, skull, and hour-glass, a more amiable, a more useful, a more *holy* being than Enoch at the head of an early family, filling up his station, and serving his generation by the will of God?"

As it was with Enoch, so with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These, we have seen, may be taken as representatives of well-known forms and developments both of human nature and of true piety; so were their circumstances, with the interests of their daily life, identical with those which concern men now. They were "not phantoms dwelling in a cloud-land. Theirs was not an anomalous, or legendary, or even a heroic life. They were simply men, living through the ordinary stages of their mortal existence upon earth, in honest and loyal conformity to the order which has been prescribed by God."* And that order supplied at once their duties and temptations, and with these their discipline. The glimpses we have into their characters, imperfect but struggling onward, identify them with those who are now living, as they were, amid the duties and trials of social life. "Amidst the distractions and humiliation of those domestic cares, which have been so often represented as unfavourable for the culture and development of an earnest spiritual existence, we see, in these men, the three distinctive types of human character gradually rising into fitness for those grand positions in the immortal world which human spirits were meant to occupy. Their course was, indeed, often overshadowed by clouds of infirmity and guilt;

* G. S. Drew: "Scripture Studies."

and yet it was ever ascending; and it continually became clearer and clearer, until, at last, it brightened into perfect day. The majestic, large-hearted nature of the first patriarch, and the gentler, calmer disposition of the second—nay, even that subtle and inventive mind of Jacob, of which the faculties were often so unworthily misused—all were rectified and perfected; and, at length, freed from every thing that was polluted, and guileful, and infirm, were prepared for an honourable entrance into the regions of the blessed dead. Thus, thoughtfully contemplating their history, we recognize it as having been set before us to sanction and illustrate the domestic order, as well as to encourage all who are now, amidst the trials of that appointment, earnestly and loyally pursuing their endless path into the future."*

Daniel: secular business and devout piety in harmony.

In the life of DANIEL we have an illustrious example of the union of business and devotion—an example which shames alike those who flee from business in order to be devout, and those who, professing to be devout, do not imbue their business with the spirit of devotion.

The incidents of Daniel's history are well known, and need not be recited. In the very first of them the young man's heart is laid bare before us—and there we find, in full possession of his soul, a tender conscientiousness whose only question is, What is duty? and whose only fear is sin. This it is that preserves him from defilement. He was still a young man when he rose to the dignity and power of the office of prime minister of the king of Babylon;

* G. S. Drew: "Scripture Studies."

but his elevation did not injure the purity and simplicity of his character. Men often gather the robes of integrity more closely around them while the storm rages, and then wantonly cast them away when the sun shines. Those whom no force of terror can drive from the right path are insensibly drawn from it by the loadstone of pleasure. But, towards the end of the administration of Daniel under Nebuchadnezzar, there appears no change in his character, except the manly ripening of his graces and virtues. The spirit in which he announced to his royal master his approaching doom combines in it all the tenderness and simplicity of the child, with all the heroic boldness and honesty of the man. His words* are the words of one who *would* have, and who *had*, a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.

For thirty years from this period, or thereabouts, Daniel occupies no public post. But he is drawn out of obscurity to interpret the handwriting in the banqueting hall of Belshazzar, and appears at once in his old character—bold in denouncing even royal impieties, yet gentle and disinterested as ever. Under Darius, the Median conqueror, he becomes the first of the three presidents to whom the whole empire is rendered subject. He is about to be still further exalted, and to have the entire presidentship put into his hands, when the jealousy of the other presidents and of the one hundred and twenty princes is awakened, and they conspire to ruin him. "But," says the history, "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel,

* Daniel iv. 19, 27.

except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."*

Daniel then was a thorough man of business, and a thorough man of God at the same time. He did not think it beneath him to pay attention, minute and exact, to all the affairs and accounts that belonged to his department. And such was his exactitude and integrity, that neither flaw nor error could be found in his administration. But it was the fear of God that made him the good man of business that he was. He might have been able and skilful without it, but probably not faithful. In one year he might have amassed, at the expense of others, wealth which would have served him a lifetime. And had he done so, he would only have been following the universal practice; but among the faithless he was faithful. There was a power of resistance to evil, and a power of constraint to well-doing, in his heart, to which his fellow-presidents were strangers; a mighty, all-pervading power which purified his heart, and made his life pure likewise. How the enemies of Daniel would have exulted if they could have gone to their king and said, "Thy first president is very devout; he serves the God of his fathers with much incense and prayer; but he robs thy subjects, he robs thy treasure, O king!" But this they could not. They had not the smallest pivot on which to place the lever of their malice. Daniel was a good man in the widest and largest sense of the word, faithful to the sovereign above him, faithful to the subjects beneath him. Like Samuel, he could have stood up before the assembled empire and say, "Behold, here I am; witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken? or whose ass

* Daniel vi. 4, 5.

have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes with?" And the universal verdict would have been, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hands." No; Daniel was a saint, not more in the oratory of his devotions than in the daily transactions of the Babylonish presidency. There was no pretence about him. He did his duty like an honest man, and by the transparent purity of his character defied his enemies.

A thorough man of God, we have said, as well as a thorough man of business. "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel," said his enemies, "except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Was he then unfaithful to his God? Now that he was clothed with honour and power, had he conformed to the worship of Babylon? No; this would have been no offence. Let him worship the emperor, or worship the sun, or worship Belus, and all would have been well. But he was faithful to his God. In no instance was there discovered, on his part, any dalliance with idols or with the pollutions of idol worship. Gentle and amiable as he was, he was firm as a rock in all that pertained to the service of his God. And here it was that his enemies found the chance of effecting his ruin. Break him they might, but bend him they could not. And if they might only entrap their sovereign into a decree which would, unwittingly to him, involve Daniel in its meshes, they were sure, they thought, to overthrow the man whose goodness was more hateful than his person.

What they did, and how far they succeeded, need not be told. The Babylonish princes could live for

thirty, and twice thirty days, without addressing one prayer to a higher than Darius. But Daniel could not; nor could he be guilty of the hypocrisy of seeming to comply with the impious terms of the royal statute. "When he knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did heretofore;" nor had he any intimation that God would command the lions to do his prophet no harm. The good man concerned himself only with duty, and left all consequences in His hands whose servant he was.

Daniel was thus faithful to his God in circumstances of the most opposite kinds. He sat in the president's chair unchanged. The warm sun of fortune (as some would call it) did not melt or soften him down into a pliable courtier, or a luxurious man of the world. Its beams wrought no harm in him. He was still faithful to his God. And then when that sun was clouded, and the man, who had basked in it to the envy of all his compeers and rivals, stood on the very verge of martyrdom, he still pursued the even tenor of his way unchanged. The lions' roar moved him as little as the syren's song.

The "world's work" which devolved on WILLIAM WILBERFORCE was related to government as was that of Daniel, though in a different way; and the modern philanthropist performed it in the same spirit as did the ancient prophet. With as wide a circumstantial diversity as can well be imagined, we can trace between

William Wilberforce; born in 1759; died in 1838.

them a close spiritual resemblance:—how, when a boy, Wilberforce was taken away from the care of a pious aunt, to prevent his being infected with the contagion of her religious principles—how he was initiated into the mysteries of the theatre and ball-room, as more fitting for his station—how he spent his youth, at home and at the university, as a devotee of youthful pleasure—how he was returned to Parliament, amidst much popular triumph, as member for his native town, when only one-and-twenty years of age, and was courted in fashionable circles, and flattered by royalty—how, by providential leadings of apparently the most casual order, and by the study of Holy Scripture, he was awakened out of the dream of his youth, and became an earnest-minded Christian, may be read elsewhere. Our present concern with him is at this point of his history, and, henceforward, in relation to the world's work. He had not, even in his most frivolous days, abandoned himself to licentiousness; but the deep guilt and black ingratitude of his past life, to use his own words, forced itself upon him in the strongest colours; and he condemned himself for having wasted his precious time, and opportunities, and talents. The thought of having so long neglected his God and Saviour brought him into a state of the deepest depression from strong convictions of his guilt. "Nothing," he says, "which I have ever read in the accounts of others exceeded what I then felt." How should he act now? Like so many others, should he flee into a monastery to save his soul? No; *he* fled to the cross of Christ, and found salvation and peace there. But, now at peace with God, he must live a new life, such a life as he had not lived before—a devout life, a spiritual life.

Must he, in order to this, flee into a monastery to give him leisure for its cultivation, and to save him from the tainted breath of the world's communications? Not so: he will remain in the world, but will not be of it. He wrote to his principal friends, informing them he was not what he had been. "Some treated the announcement as the effect of a temporary depression, which social intercourse would soon relieve: one threw his letter angrily into the fire: others, knowing that his past life had not been vicious, imagined that he could but turn ascetic, and regretted the expected loss of his social accomplishments and political assistance." The statesman, his friend, William Pitt, hastened to Wimbledon to cheer him out of his fancies. For two hours the friends discussed their differences. The man of the world tried to reason the young Christian out of his convictions, but soon found himself unable to combat their correctness, if he admitted that Christianity was true.

To the mother who, when he was yet a child, rescued him from what she deemed fanaticism, he wrote in terms which breathed affection and decision. If we really make the Bible the criterion of our opinions and actions, he said, "We must reckon on not finding ourselves able to comply with all those customs of the world in which many who call themselves Christians are too apt to indulge without reflection."

Accordingly, he withdrew his steps from every haunt of worldly mirth; but not to shut himself up either in his closet in town, or in his hermitage in the country, and there cultivate a hot-house piety. "No, my dear mother," he wrote; "in my circumstances this would merit no better name than desertion. It is my constant prayer that God will enable me to

serve him more steadily, and my fellow-creatures more assiduously. And I trust that my prayers will be granted, through the intercession of that Saviour, by whom only we have access with confidence into this grace wherein we stand; and who has promised that he will lead on his people from strength to strength, and gradually from thence to a more complete resemblance to their Divine Original." His duty to his Saviour, and his duty to his fellow-creatures, were performed side by side, or rather were blended into one by the principle of doing every thing as unto the Lord.

His progress in that resemblance to his Divine Original, which he says was the subject of his constant prayers, was not retarded by the part which he took in the world's work, while that part was sanctified and ennobled by the Christian motives which actuated him. "As a politician, he could no longer wheel round in the circle of party; he could no longer, even to a limited extent, take his opinions in the mass from the faction to which he belonged. He told Pitt he would still support him when he could; but that he was no longer to be a party man, even to the same extent as before. 'The first years that I was in Parliament,' he said in after-life, 'I did nothing—nothing, I mean, to any good purpose; my own distinction was my darling object.' But, on his becoming a Christian, he acted on new principles. His powerful mind, his eloquence in speech, his influence with Mr. Pitt, his general popularity, were now all as talents lent to him by God. And for his work, whatever it might be, he lost no time in preparing himself. He set about the task of concentrating his faculties, and enriching his intellectual stores; he turned to study with an

earnestness he had never hitherto known; above all, he commenced the careful and uninterrupted study of Holy Writ." The peculiar work which Providence gave him to do in the English legislature was great and glorious; but, if it had been less so in its own nature, it would still have been holy work, being performed in the fear of God. The spirit which he carried into the senate is well described by Lord Brougham. "He was fearful of giving the least pain in any quarter, even while heated with the zeal of controversy on questions that roused all his passions; and more anxious, if it were possible, to gain over, rather than to overpower, an adversary; disarming him by kindness or the force of reason, or awakening appeals to his feelings, rather than defeating him by hostile attacks." When a well-known popular member designated him, repeatedly and irregularly, as "the honourable and religious gentleman," Mr. Wilberforce poured out a strain of sarcasm which, says Lord Brougham, "none who heard it can ever forget;" "not," says his lordship, "because he was ashamed of the cross he gloried in, but because he felt indignant at any one in the British senate deeming piety a matter of imputation." "A common friend of the parties having remarked to Sir Samuel Romilly, beside whom he sat, that this greatly outmatched Pitt himself, the great master of sarcasm, Sir Samuel replied, 'Yes, it is the most striking thing I almost ever heard; but I look on it as a more singular proof of Wilberforce's virtue than of his genius; for who, but he, ever was possessed of such a formidable weapon and never used it?'" He was a Christian in the legislature as well as at the table of the Lord; and in the one he practised the lessons which he learned at the other.

If there is one earthly position more than another in which it might be supposed that true religion could not live or prosper, it is among the temptations of a soldier's life. And yet even this position supplies us with many illustrations of the power and beauty of religion. Be the truth what it may, on the question which has been agitated respecting the lawfulness of war, it cannot be questioned that many warriors have been eminent Christians. The camp and the battle-field do not extinguish the power of religion. And this is the point of our present reference to the subject.

It was of a Roman centurion our Lord said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And it was in the person of another Roman centurion that the Gentiles were admitted to the full privileges of the Christian church. Cornelius was "a just man, and one that feared God," and was honoured, like the peaceful shepherd patriarchs of the Jewish nation, with a visit by an angel, who was commissioned to tell him, "Thy prayer is heard." And it was in reference to this Roman captain and his kinsmen and near friends that Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

The names of Colonel Blackader, Colonel Gardiner, and Major-General Andrew Burn, have long been known as the names of eminent Christians. And recent biography has added largely to the number of godly men who have served Christ in a soldier's life. Captain Hedley Vicars, Sir Henry Havelock, Colonel Mountain, Captain Hammond, Captain Bate, and others, are now well known by their memoirs. We take the history and character of two of this holy band, as

"men representative" of many who are like minded in the great concerns of Christian faith and practice.

In approaching the lives of Hedley Vicars and General Havelock, one is forcibly reminded of the words of Cowper's hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way." One of these Christian worthies was descended from a Spanish cavalier, who came to England in the suite of Katharine of Arragon, the first queen of Henry the Eighth; the other, according to some local traditions, from a Norse sea-king, or pirate, who crossed the sea and found a home on the coast of Lincoln, centuries before. Had the Spanish Don Vicaro and the Norwegian Hafluck possessed the seer's gift, it would have puzzled them not a little to understand the character of those illustrious descendants of theirs, whom the Christian England of the nineteenth century delights to honour.

HEDLEY VICARS was a wayward boy, open-hearted and generous, high-spirited and fearless, loved and loving, and yet thoughtless as the idle wind. When twelve years old, his father's dying hand was laid upon his head with the earnest prayer, "that he might be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and so fight manfully under his banner to glorify his holy name." But hope deferred had often made his widowed mother's heart sick before that prayer was answered. For years after he entered the army, he lived a life of general recklessness, chequered with occasional convictions of sin, which resulted in vigorous though short-lived efforts at reform. But, from the hour of his conversion to Christ, his life was pure and holy. All that was buoyant and genial in his natural temper

Born in the Mauritius, Dec. 7, 1826; died before Sebastopol, March 22, 1855.

was sanctified by the grace of God, and won the hearts of all who were not repelled by his religion. At home and abroad his face seemed a signal for cheerfulness. "He walked in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and with the free heart of a child enjoyed every pleasure in the gift of which he could trace his Father's hand; yet was there still the evidence in his daily life of a chastened and sober spirit, and of his steadfast obedience to his Master's word, 'Watch and pray.'"

"Since Mr. Vicars became so good," said one of the light company of the 97th, years after the great change took place, and a few days before his embarkation for Greece and the Crimea, "he has steadied about four hundred men in the regiment." "Four hundred?" was repeated with surprise by the lady to whom the statement was made. "I don't mean," said the man, "that he has made all the four hundred as good as himself. That he couldn't. I know enough of religion to know that God alone could do that. But while he was adjutant, and since too, he has sobered and steadied nigh four hundred of the drunkenmost and wildest men in the regiment. There isn't a better man or a better officer in the Queen's service."

The miseries of the winter spent by the English and French armies before Sebastopol have now passed into history. It was in the midst of them, on the mud floors of the hospital tents, that Hedley Vicars's faith was to have its last trial. Sharing as he did, in no small measure, the general toil and privation, with the superadded amount of suffering inseparable from his power of strong sympathy, he was ever fulfilling the apostolic injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens." His faith was not permitted to waver. Through the long dark night of that winter, its lamp never wanted

oil, but burned with a clear and steady light which not only cheered those around, but also cast its bright reflection upon praying spirits three thousand miles distant. It has been remarked, says his biographer, by a keen observer of human nature, who himself passed through the same ordeal, that, in the course of that winter, the individual characteristics of men stood out in more striking colours than could have been seen under other circumstances. The selfish became more tenaciously selfish than before, whilst those who were capable of rising to the heights of self-denial lived a life of daily heroism.

Hedley Vicars was one of the last. During the severe cold of that winter, the only bed he allowed himself was made of stones and leaves, until a fur rug arrived from England, which he felt was invested with a kind of claim of friendship to be retained for his own use. Everything else which could bear the name of luxury, or even of common comfort, was given to the deeper necessities of the suffering soldiers.

When in command of an outpost, he and his men had to sleep for three weeks in the open air, or at least under roofing made of bushes, through which the wind and rain freely penetrated. At length, however, two tents were pitched,—one for the company, the other for its officer. But that officer gave up his own tent to his men, and continued to rough it in the open air, considering himself more hardy than many of them. The presence of Christ was his support and joy.

After some months of "weariness and painfulness," but of spiritual labours and spiritual enjoyment "more abundant," Hedley Vicars received a soldier's summons into the presence of God. "The night of the 22nd of March was dark and dreary. The wind rose

high and swept in stormy gusts across the Crimea. There was for a time a stillness over the three armies, like the calm before the tempest. At the advanced post of the British forces, was a detachment of the 97th Regiment, commanded by Captain Vicars. No watch-fire on that post of danger might cast its red light, as aforetime, upon the Book of God. Yet was that place of peril holy ground. Once more the night breeze bore away the hallowed sounds of prayer." When he fell his men fought their way through the ranks of the Russians to defend the parting life of the leader whom they loved, and in their arms they bore him back; but before they reached the door of his tent with their precious charge his life had ebbed.

In Hedley Vicars we see the grace of God in no dim and doubtful manner. "Every one," wrote a fellow-officer, while weeping over his cold corpse the morning after his death, — "Every one liked and respected Vicars; even those who did not agree with his strict religion; and those who had known him so long as the leader of every mad riot, when after closely watching him for years, and finding that once enlisted in Christ's army he NEVER flinched, at least gave in, and acknowledged that Vicars, at any rate, was a true Christian." "Rough hands wiped the starting tear away," when the name of Vicars was mentioned on the sad morrow of his death. And now that name is dear to tens of thousands who had not known it while he lived, but have heard of the grace of God in him since the fatal conflict on the heights of Sebastopol.

Henry Havelock: born at Bishopwearmouth April 5, 1795; died at Lucknow, November 24, 1857.

The life and character of the lamented Sir HENRY HAVELOCK illustrate the compatability of the highest religious

character with busy occupation in the most adverse of this world's pursuits, and show how the principles of such a character animate and ennoble the performance of this world's duties. In boyhood, Henry Havelock was distinguished both for fearlessness and for thoughtfulness. The former was exhibited in many youthful feats; the latter acquired for him the title of "old philosopher" among his companions at the Charterhouse School.

"The most important part of the history of any man is his connection through faith, with the invisible world. So of Henry Havelock it may be recorded, that there were early indications of the strivings of the good Spirit of God in his soul, though Satan and the world were permitted for many years to triumph." So he testified himself in later life. In those early days at the Charterhouse young Havelock and some of his companions were wont to meet in one of their sleeping-rooms for religious purposes. Sermons were read, and conversations ensued upon the reading, as to the bearing of the truth on their own conduct. But the early promise thus awakened was not immediately realized.

In 1815, young Havelock "yielded," to use his own words, "to the military propensities of his race," by asking his brother, who was then in the army, to get a commission for him. And one month after the battle of Waterloo he was appointed second lieutenant in the rifle brigade.

In January, 1823, he embarked for India. And it was on the voyage thither, thirteen years after the grave had closed upon the pious mother who first taught him to lisp the name of Jesus, that he became a decided follower of the Saviour. At the time of his

embarkation he was in the position of a man "feeling after God, if haply he might find him." The chief means in leading him to Christ was the conversation of James Gardner, a fellow-lieutenant. And from the time of his religious decision, he was not ashamed to own his Heavenly Master, but was concerned only to walk worthy of his name. He was not less a man now that he was a Christian, nor less a soldier, but sought to perform his duties as both a man and a soldier in the fear of God. Luther's hymn may be regarded as his motto from this time forward :—

> "Put thou thy trust in God:
> In duty's paths go on:
> Fix on his word thy steadfast eye;
> So shall thy work be done."

"He was a man who really believed, and who, seeing the path of duty, held consequences as light as air. His piety underlaid his whole character. There could be but one path—that of duty; and therefore he was never undecided. There could be but one object of fear—sin; and personal danger was as the idle wind. There could be but One that ruled—that was the Most High God; wherefore exaltation and despondency were alike impossible."

About ten years after entering the service, Havelock applied for the vacant adjutancy of the 13th. But his psalm-singing had given offence to some officers of the corps, who did not fail to send unfavourable representations to Lord William Bentinck to prevent the appointment. On the receipt of these letters Lord William called for a return of the number of punishments inflicted on the men in the different companies of the regiment, within a given time, for drunkenness and irregularities; and he found that the men whose

religious improvement Havelock had been assiduous in promoting were the best behaved, the most sober, and the most orderly men in the corps. When announcing his decision to Mrs. Havelock, the governor-general said, "The complaint is that the men of Havelock's company are Baptists. I only wish that the whole regiment was Baptist." "Not unlike the case of Daniel," says the Rev. W. Brock, "was the case of Havelock just now. No occasion could be found against him, except it could be found against him concerning the law of his God. And when that came to be investigated, it turned out that the men who feared God were the men who honoured the king. The praying soldiers were the soldiers who had not deserved punishment. The fanatics were those who kept themselves away from the canteen. The enthusiasts were the most sober and the best behaved of all their comrades. 'The saints,' by the most faithful of all tests —an official military return—were the honour and the safety of the regiment in which they served."

We do not follow the history of Havelock's military achievements. Enough for our purpose, to sum up his character in the emphatic, though homely, words of Lord Hardinge: "He was every inch a soldier, and every inch a Christian." To be a soldier of a high order it was not necessary that he should cease to be a Christian; to be a Christian of a high order it was not necessary that he should cease to be a soldier. Whatsoever reproach or worldly loss he might be called to bear for Christ's sake, he was content to bear it; he had counted the cost. Whatsoever duties devolved on him in the family, in the camp, and in the field, he would discharge them all as under the great Task-

master's eye. If preserved from death, when horse after horse was shot under him, and when a bag of gunpowder was his pillow, with fiery bullets falling thick as hailstones around him, he acknowledged that it was by the kind protection of his Father in heaven. If, after many hours of heroic fight, himself and his soldiers stood on the deserted battle-field in the proud consciousness of being conquerors, he was not loath, but forward to say, "Away with vain glory. Thanks to Almighty God who hath given us the victory."

The common soldiery of a standing army is, perhaps, the last class of the community in which we should expect to find the fruits of a true faith. But, blessed be God, even there we find them, and that not to be transplanted into a more genial clime as soon as they have sprung up, but prospering in the most adverse circumstances, amid the withering blights of the worst associations. "The army," says one* who can speak from experience, "far from being a desert waste, where weeds and thorns are to be gathered, is a field in which a rich harvest may, with proper culture, be reaped to the glory of God's grace. Such, at least, I have found it to be; for I can truly say that, during the twelve years that I have been a military chaplain, I have seen far more to encourage me in sowing the seed of eternal life, than during an equal period of my ministry among civilians."

It is a well-known fact, that much seed of divine truth is "choked" and rendered unfruitful by "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things." And solemnly did

* Rev. W. Hare, Chaplain to the Forces.

Christ say to his disciples, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day (of the Lord) come upon you unawares."* In the same spirit the apostle Paul said, "They that *will be* rich (whose hearts are set on riches) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."† But neither Christ nor his servant instructed men to "flee from men's pursuits," in order to avoid the evils that are incident to them. On the contrary, they would have Christians to glorify God by being "not slothful in business" while "fervent in spirit." And examples might be multiplied without number to show how compatible the one of these requirements is with the other.

The seaman makes almost every wind that blows, his servant to speed him on his voyage; and ships may be seen daily meeting each other, and sailing in opposite directions by the help of the same breeze. Earthly care and occupation do become means of spiritual injury, but they may, and by the Christian ought to, be made means of spiritual good. His whole existence on earth is a discipline. The joys and sorrows, and hopes and fears, of this life are designed as means of education for another state. And there must be some mode of so improving worldly labour and care, which form the greater part of the staple of human life, as to convert it from an enemy of spirituality into means of grace.

"The weight of a clock," says the Rev. John Caird, "seems a heavy drag on the delicate movements of its machinery; but so far from arresting or

* Luke xxi. 34. † 1 Timothy vi. 9.

impeding those movements, it is indispensable to their steadiness, balance, accuracy: there must be some analogous action of what seems the clog and drag-weight of worldly work on the finer movements of man's spiritual being. The planets in the heavens have a twofold action,—in their orbits and on their axes—the one motion not interfering, but carried on simultaneously and in perfect harmony with the other; so must it be that man's twofold activities—round the heavenly and the earthly centre—disturb not nor jar with each other. He who diligently discharges the duties of the earthly may not less sedulously—nay, at the same moment—fulfil those of the heavenly sphere; at once 'diligent in business' and 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'"

"No man can become a soldier by studying books on military tactics in his closet: he must in actual service acquire those habits of coolness, courage, discipline, address, rapid combination, without which the most learned in the theory of strategy or engineering will be but a schoolboy soldier after all. And, in the same way, a man in solitude and study may become a most learned theologian, or may train himself into the timid, effeminate piety of what is technically called the 'religious life;' but never in the highest and holiest sense can he become a *religious man*, until he has acquired those habits of daily self-denial, of resistance to temptation, of kindness, gentleness, humility, sympathy, active beneficence, which are to be acquired only in daily contact with mankind. Tell us not, then, that the man of business, the bustling tradesman, the toilworn labourer, has little or no time to attend to religion. As well tell us that the pilot, amid the winds and storms, has no leisure to attend to

navigation; or the general, on the field of battle, to the art of war. Where *will* he attend to it? Religion is not a perpetual moping over good books; religion is not even (merely) prayer, praise, holy ordinances. These are necessary to religion: no man is religious without them; but religion (in this life) is mainly and chiefly the glorifying God amid the duties and trials of the world; the guiding our course amid the adverse winds and currents of temptation, by the starlight of duty and the compass of divine truth; the bearing us manfully, wisely, courageously, for the honour of Christ, our great Leader, in the conflict of life."

"How then shall earthly care become heavenly discipline? How shall the disposition of the weight be altered so as to press the spirit upward towards God, instead of downward and away?" This can be effected only by Christians cherishing a genuine and real belief in the presence and agency of God in the minor events and details of life. "To the Christian, who really believes in the agency of God in the smallest events of life, confides in his love and makes his sympathy his refuge, the thousand minute cares and perplexities of life become each one a fine affiliating bond between the soul and its God. Christ is known, not by abstract definition and by high-raised conceptions of the soul's aspiring hours, but known as a man knoweth his friend: he is known by the hourly wants he supplies; known by every care with which he momentarily sympathizes, every apprehension which he relieves, every temptation which he enables us to surmount. We learn to know Christ as the infant child learns to know its mother and father—by all the helplessness and all the dependence which are incident to this commencement of

our moral existence; and as we go on thus year by year, and find in every changing situation, in every reverse, in every trouble, from our lightest sorrow to those sorrows which wring our soul from its depths, that he is equally present, and that his gracious aid is equally adequate; our faith seems gradually almost to change to sight, and Christ's sympathy, his love and care, seem to us more real than any other source of reliance; and multiplied cares and trials are only new avenues of acquaintance between us and heaven."

It is often found difficult to preserve a spirit of deep piety in a life of labour and engrossing care; but it would be still more difficult in a life of indolence. "To pass our lives in a course contrary to nature, even the heathen would have told us, is the sure way to be miserable; and it is the sure way also to be wicked." It would not be good for Christians themselves to be taken out of the world. All human affections require outward circumstances and conditions, not only for their manifestations, but also for their exercise and development. "We may persuade ourselves," says Professor Whewell, "that we have faith; but our faith is not genuine, except it work by love; and love is not Christian love, except it can live, and love, and work on, through those clouds of indifference, and hatred, and jarring wishes, and opposing interests, which fill the atmosphere of the world. These clouds are the atmosphere of the world, but they are also the atmosphere in which the Christian spirit is tried. The world breeds them: the Christian temper dispels them, or, at least, parts them, makes its way through them like the sun, and turns them into attendant glories."

"To me to live is Christ," said the apostle Paul, and it was in no fit of enthusiasm he said it. He was not standing in the great congregation, and carried away by excitement to use language which a more sober judgment would condemn. He was a prisoner at Rome, when, in the most entire calm and quiet, in his own hired house, in the presence only of his amanuensis, of the soldier that guarded him, and perhaps of his "son" Timothy, he said, "To me to live is Christ." And he spoke not as an apostle, but as a Christian. And his successors in Christian principle and in Christian practice are to be found not among martyrs and confessors merely, but among all who love the Saviour. To exempt a man from the obligation of "living to Christ," or deprive him of the honour, would be to doom his heart to find its home and happiness in things seen and material. Every true Christian is a successor of the apostle in the duty and privilege of living for Christ. And it cannot be too earnestly maintained that, in order to realize this highest end of existence, it is not necessary that a man should cease to work with his hands, and give himself up to religious studies, or to a professional religious calling. It is only needful that he should subordinate all his temporal pursuits to the honour of Christ, and prosecute them in obedience to his will and in an unworldly spirit. Necessity may be laid upon him to toil much and long: his family may subject him to incessant care and labour; but while thus employed it is quite possible to be able to say, "To me to live is Christ." The confessor magnifies Christ before kings: the martyr magnifies Christ at the stake; but there is nothing to exclude the humblest Christian from the goodly fellowship: he magnifies Christ in the

quiet walks of life, in the daily labours of his hands, and in the sphere of his own domestic circle. And if some are called to shine as lights on mountain tops, illuminating regions far and wide around, private Christians may shine in the secluded valley, and illumine, by their holy walk and limited endeavours, some small sequestered spot which the blaze of the mountain light cannot reach. Let no man deprive you, Christian, of the honour and blessedness of saying, "To me to live is Christ." And let your own heart never shrink from the felt obligation, that for this end you have been born again, that Christ may be magnified in your body whether by life or by death.

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.

"A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

"All may of thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture 'for thy sake'
Will not grow bright and clean.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that an action fine.

"This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL WORK.

CONTENTS.—No man liveth to himself—What shall I do?—Christian women —Ancient Rome — A day in the life of Christ—Hannah More—Sir Edward Parry — Havelock — Sarah Martin—Vanderkemp—Intercessory prayer—George Wagner—Little acts—Tertius—Baruch—The one talent—A single hymn—Curse ye Meroz—Montgomery's Wayfaring Man.

"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."—1 JOHN iv. 20, 21.

"He who plowed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper;
He is only remembered by what he has done.
Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken,
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown
Shall pass on to ages; all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.
So let my living be, so be my dying,
So let my name be, unblazoned, unknown.
Unpraised and unmissed, I shall still be remembered;
Yes, but remembered by what I have done."

HORATIUS BONAR.

SOCIAL WORK.

"No man liveth to himself." The most selfish, the most solitary, exercise an influence beyond themselves for good or for evil. The thoughts they think, the words they speak, the very looks they look, however much they may intend them to be bounded by the narrow circle they draw around themselves, pass beyond that circle without asking their consent, and tell on others whom they have no desire either to benefit or harm. Let them but utter a word and it is gone from them for ever: they cannot recall it, if they would: it fulfils its mission, whether benign or malign, in some ear and on some heart; and thence it proceeds in its onward progress, cursing or blessing, it may be, to the end of time. And even if men should resolve to speak no word, lest the spoken word should grow and multiply in fruits which they do not desire, their self-imposed silence, the compressed lip, and the unhappy look will produce some impression on those who witness them—an impression which will not terminate with itself, and which will verify the social fact that no one liveth unto himself. Our example may be silent and unobtrusive, but it cannot be wholly unobserved. And if the first circle of observers be small, yet each of them becomes the centre of a new circle, and our influence becomes thus diffused far beyond our control and even our knowledge. Whatever station we occupy, whether we live in the public

eye or in the deepest privacy, whether we are ambitious to be something or ambitious to be nothing, it is a necessity of our social existence that we cannot live to ourselves. There is no wall of exclusiveness so thick or so high, but that the influence of our character and conduct, the influence, in short, of what we are and what we do, will penetrate through it or climb over it.

It is a solemn fact that we are under the operation of this law of social life, and that its operation is involuntary and constant. Life itself is a solemn thing. We may so use it, that it would be better for us we had never possessed it. Or we may so use it, that it shall be "a thing of beauty and of joy for ever." *

Such life, with its voluntary and involuntary contribution to the common weal or to the common woe, is doubly solemn. There may be some whom we have already unconsciously benefitted, and who have been made more strong, more holy, more happy, by some casual word we have dropped, or some casual deed we have done, of which there is no record in our own memory. There may be others whom some casual word or deed of ours has accelerated in the downward path of unbelief and ungodliness,—some to whose ruin, already consummated, words or deeds of ours gave a fatal impulse, but whom neither labour nor prayer of ours, if persevered in for ages, will now raise out of their slough of eternal despond.

The apostolic words, "None of us liveth to himself,"† are not, however, the mere declaration of a social fact; they are a declaration of Christian law.

* We slightly change the poet's words:—
"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

† Romans xiv. 7.

Our involuntary influence may be either evil or good: it may be the influence of selfishness producing selfishness. But the Christian law is, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." * "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." † The terms selfish Christian, malignant Christian, covetous Christian, are as incongruous and self-contradictory, as the terms lying Christian, dishonest Christian, sensual Christian. And the Christian is bound to avoid covetousness, and malignity, and selfishness, as he would avoid falsehood, and fraud, and sensuality. The law, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth," is of equal obligation with the law, "Thou shalt not steal."

The Christian love, which forms the soul of the law, "no one liveth to himself," may very appropriately "begin" its social work "at home." Let Christians give it full sway in their families. If "there is no place like home," let love destroy those selfish, crooked tempers which mar its peace,—those tempers which break up families, even while outwardly one, into fragments that are brought indeed very near to each other, but are not "like kindred drops which mingle into one." Let all seek within their home circle their first and best sphere of well-doing. It will amply repay their toil.

But Christian love, beginning at home, will not be content to be confined there. It is too expansive for that. It will overlap the narrow boundary; or, if it be forcibly restrained within it, it will resent the wrong by dying a natural death in its prison. That it

* Philippians ii. 4. † 1 Corinthians vi. 19, 20.

may live and thrive it must breathe the fresh air of the world, and brace itself with exercise in deeds of mercy.

What shall I do? is probably the question which will be asked by many—a question which has been answered sententiously thus: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty: thy second duty will already have become clearer." And this is only a paraphrase of the inspired saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it," and "do it with thy might." Christian love will find objects on which to expend the energy of its well-doing, at the very door, lying in sin and wretchedness, in more desperate case than the man who fell among thieves in the solitary and robber-haunted defile which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho. It will find them in the furthest regions of the earth, all "neighbours," according to our Lord's teaching, everywhere needing and awaiting the application of the same Christian balm. Let it lay its hands of mercy on some of these, and bind up their wounds, and pour in the oil and wine of gospel truth and love.

Christian women find it often more difficult than their brothers do to discover a fitting sphere of benevolent activity. But the Bible discloses to us a singular variety of work performed by women in the service of their God. It was the work of Miriam to sound the loud timbrel when Pharaoh and his host sank like lead in the mighty waters. It was the work of certain "wise-hearted women" in the camp of Israel in the wilderness, "to spin with their hands and bring that which they had spun, both of blue,

and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen," for furniture for the tabernacle of the Lord. It was the work of Deborah to be more than a "mother in Israel," to be a prophetess, a captain, and a deliverer. It was the work of Hannah to train her own child Samuel for the service of God. It was the work of certain honoured women in the days of our Lord to minister to him of their substance. It was the work of Mary of Bethany to take her box of precious ointment and pour it on the head of her Lord in token of veneration and love—an unconscious preparation, at the same time, for his approaching burial. It was the work of the poor widow, whom the eye of Jesus singled out from the multitude of worshippers in the temple, to give two mites to the sacred treasury. It was the work of Dorcas to make coats and garments for the poor widows that were at Joppa. It was the work of Priscilla, with her husband Aquila, to take that young, and learned, and eloquent Alexandrian, Apollos, and teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and to be at many times, and in many ways, the helper of Paul himself and of other servants of God. In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we find the apostle sending his Christian salutations to not a few holy women who "laboured in the Lord." Of Urbane, and Tryphena, and Tryphosa, and Julia, and Persis, and other Roman women thus honoured by Paul, or rather by the Spirit that inspired Paul, we know nothing beyond the fact of their being Christian "labourers." Whether they belonged to the plebeian or patrician order, whether they were rich or poor, whether they were young or old, we know not. What their occupations and trials in life, whether they floated along peacefully amid the smiles

and affections of parents, and brothers, and sisters, or had to struggle against the winds and tides of hostile relatives and of adverse circumstances, we know not. But more precious than the names of their parents, or the number of their years, or their earthly rank, is the statement that they "laboured in the Lord;" a statement which makes them forerunners of all, of every age and rank, who, in any sphere, or by any means, "labour" to make known to others the blessed name of Christ.

The apostolic church in Rome knew nothing of convents and conventual "sisterhoods;" but the beloved Persis and Urbane, and Tryphena and Tryphosa, were "sisters of charity" in the highest sense. And the Rome of their day furnished scope, ample and varied, for all their gifts and exertions. It contained within a circuit of twelve miles more than two millions of inhabitants. Among these there were of course all the contrasts which are seen in a modern city, all the painful lines of separation between luxury and squalor, wealth and want, and these on an exaggerated scale. The number of the slaves was perhaps about a million. A vast proportion of the citizens of the plebeian order lived on public or private charity. "Yet were these pauper citizens proud of their citizenship, though many of them had no better sleeping places for the night than the public porticos or the vestibules of temples. They cared for nothing beyond bread for the day, the games of the circus, and the savage delight of gladiatorial shows. Manufactures and trade they regarded as the business of the slave and the foreigner. Every kind of nationality and religion found its representative in Rome, which was like London, with all its miseries, vices, and follies exaggerated,

and without its Christianity." Such a population supplied, indeed, a field for "much labour in the Lord," but one which was far more difficult to occupy than that which invites the toil and prayers of Christian women in modern England.

But let us turn to our Great Exemplar. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," he said—words which naturally and rightly produced the impression that he claimed equality with God. In the language of a faithful and diligent servant, he said, on another occasion, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

"What would we not give," says an American author, "for a few pages of the private diary of Julius Cæsar, or Cicero, or Brutus, or Augustus; or for the minute reminiscences of any one who had spent a few days in the company of either of these distinguished men? What a flood of light would the discovery of such a manuscript throw upon Roman life, but especially upon the private opinions, the motives, the aspirations, the moral estimates of the men whose names have become household words throughout the world!" There has been nothing left for us to desire, however, in reference to the life of a greater than the Cæsars. The history of our Great Exemplar has been written by men who travelled with him, on foot, throughout the length and breadth of Palestine; who partook with him of his frugal meals, and bore with him the trial of hunger, weariness, and want of shelter; who followed him through the lonely wilderness and the crowded street; who saw his miracles in every variety of form, and listened to his discourses in public and

his explanations in private. Their narrative, though brief, and without adornment or words of eulogy, enables us to realize his character and spirit, and manner of life, more vividly and with more of personal sympathy, than we can those of any other distinguished person that has ever lived. The history of one day in his life, as told in few and artless terms by those who themselves shared in its pursuits,* will suffice, if carefully studied, to show us how Jesus Christ "went about doing good." Private kindness, the relief of distress, public teaching, and ministration to the wants of the famishing, filled up the entire day. Let his disciples learn to follow his example. Let them, like him, forget themselves, their own wants, and their own weariness, that they may, as he did, scatter blessings on every side, as they move onward in the path of their daily life.

Those who are not conformed to Christ in well-doing are none of his; for "he gave himself for men, to purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealots* for good works." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "Freely have ye received, freely give." "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Paul and his fellow-apostles, Luther and his fellow-reformers, Whitefield and his fellow-preachers, Howard and his fellow-philanthropists, Raikes and

* Matthew xiv. 13—21; Mark vi. 30—44; Luke. ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—14.

his fellow-sabbath-school teachers, Clarkson and his fellow-labourers, in the abolition of the slave-trade, Carey and his fellow-missionaries, are all representatives and embodiments of the one principle of Christian well-doing. And to write the history of those works of faith and labours of love of which the advent of Christ into our world has been the spring, and the example of Christ the pattern, would be to write the history of the pure and living church of every age. A few instances, however, of holy toil for the spiritual good of mankind may be given to show how, in circumstances varied, and for the greater part unusual, Christian hands have found something to do, and Christian hearts prompted them to do it "with their might."

HANNAH MORE occupies a high place in the literature of her country, but a still higher in the history of Christian well-doing. Hannah More; born 1745; died Sept. 7, 1833. At the time when the fame of her writings was echoing throughout the land, the grace of God brought her heart into subjection to a better Master than self or the world; and thenceforward, constrained by the love of Christ, she lived to do good. She employed her pen, her property, her tongue, all in the blessed service of her Lord. By schools for the poor, and by providing a Christian literature both for the humbler and the higher classes, she accomplished a great work in her day.

Ten miles from her residence at Cowslip Green, lay the romantic parish of Cheddar. Miss More and her sister, in exploring its beauties, were grieved to find that its spiritual aspect was dreary to the last degree. They found but one Bible in all the parish, and that

was used to prop a flower-pot. The people were ignorant, barbarous, and brutal. But what could a family of feeble women, residing at a distance of ten miles from the spot, do in such a case? Nothing but sigh over it, most such women would think. But not so reasoned the Misses More. Something to pierce the gloom of this terrible darkness, something to raise this besotted people, they would attempt. A school was determined on. This school was to be a centre, from which in various ways Christian instruction and influence, as well as secular knowledge, were to be spread abroad. But to establish such an institution was no easy matter. The people did not want it. A great many refused to send their children, unless they would pay for them, and not a few refused because they were not sure of her intentions, being apprehensive that, at the end of seven years, if they attended so long, she would acquire a power over them, and send them beyond sea. "I was told," she writes, "we should meet with great opposition if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich and very brutal; so I ventured into the den of this monster, in a country as savage as himself, near Bridgewater. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country; it was the worst thing in the world for the poor, for it made them lazy and useless. In vain did I represent to him that they would be more industrious as they were better principled; and that, for my own part, I had no selfish views in what I was doing. He gave me to understand that he knew the world too well to believe either the one or the other." Miss More, however, boldly engaged a house, and had it set in order immediately. "For," she says, writing to Mr. Wilberforce, "the

night cometh; and it is a comfort to think, that though I may be dust and ashes in a few weeks, yet by that time this business will be in actual motion." In connection with the Sabbath-school, which formed an important part of the scheme, an evening service for adults was established, when a hymn was sung and a simple prayer and sermon read by one of the sisters. The work prospered. A mighty change was effected at Cheddar. The Spirit of the Lord preparing the soil, the good seed took root and bore fruit many-fold. Numbers of both the old and young were led to the Saviour. The desert became a fruitful field. The savages of Cheddar were not only civilized, but many of them were truly christianized. The all-potent influence of the doctrine of the cross transformed their rude homes into the happy and intelligent abodes of peace and love. Prayer and praise arose from many a cottage hearth, whence before had been daily heard the sounds of daring profanity, of wild revelry, and of hateful malice. The Misses More found two mining villages at the top of Mendip in a state of the most frightful brutality. No constable would venture thither to perform his functions, and they were warned that any attempt to labour there would be made at the risk of their lives. But venture they would and did, and there they had a further proof that the weapon they carried—the gospel—was all powerful to destroy every stronghold of Satan. These are but specimens of the work to which these Christian sisters devoted themselves.

As years passed on, school after school was established, until in 1796 the various schools and societies established by them contained about sixteen or seventeen hundred persons. They were scattered over ten

parishes, and lay at considerable distances; so that the Misses More had a diameter of above twenty miles to travel, in order to get at them. "In some of the most profligate places," wrote Miss More to Mr. Newton, "we have had the most success;" "and where we chiefly fail, it is with your *pretty good kind of people*, who do not see how they can be better. I think it has pleased God to give us the most rapid progress in the parish we last took up, not a year ago. This place has helped to people the county jail and Botany Bay beyond any I know of. They seemed to have reached a crisis of iniquity."

Thus the sisters found themselves charged with a delightful but most laborious and responsible undertaking. The entire cost was, of course, far beyond their own means; but whatever was wanting was readily supplied to them by generous Christian friends. But of the care and labour of superintendence they could not be relieved; and the persecutions to which they were exposed were hard to bear. In periodicals and pamphlets they were accused, for years, of being the abettors of fanaticism, and sedition, and immorality. Under the pressure of this trial, Miss More wrote to a friend:—"Battered, hacked, scalped, tomahawked as I have been for three years, and continue to be, brought out every month as an object of scorn and abhorrence, I seem to have nothing to do in the world." But she could speak also of the lessons learned in the furnace:—"I have learned the true value of human opinion; and I have learned much of the corruption, not of the world only, but of my own heart. I have gotten stronger faith in the truth of Scripture. I feel a general spirit of submission; and there are at times, but not often, when I

can even rejoice that I have been counted worthy to suffer in this cause."

Her schools survived the storm, and were maintained by her during the remainder of her life; and she knew what it was to experience the joy of the reaper, as well as the anxiety of the sower.

Edward Parry; born Dec. 19, 1790; died July 8, 1855.

The third and last voyage of Sir EDWARD PARRY, in search of a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is memorable as the period (1824–5) in which this illustrious seaman learned to look to Christ as his Saviour. In all his dark winterings in the north, he had made the health and comfort of his men his special care; but now he was additionally anxious to promote their moral and spiritual improvement. And when, a few years later, he was called to occupy an important post on the outskirts of an Australian forest, amongst the convicts and aborigines of New South Wales, he found wider scope for the principle of well-doing which was implanted in his heart. The people who were then placed under his charge consisted of three classes: first, the officers and servants of the Australian Agricultural Company; secondly, the convicts working also in the employ of the company, or acting as domestic servants in the officers' families; and lastly, the natives, whose home was in the "bush," and whose encampments were often found within a few yards of the settlement. The almost total want of proper discipline, which had previously existed in the colony, rendered it a matter of no small difficulty to introduce a new system of order and regularity. This, however, Parry was determined to effect, and though there was at the outset much to dishearten, his

judgment and firmness by degrees triumphed over all obstacles, while the genial kindness of his disposition, and his evident desire for the general welfare, gained the respect and affection of all. While maintaining his authority as governor, and directing matters of business with the most scrupulous exactness, he regarded nothing as too trivial to occupy his attention which could in any way tend to promote innocent enjoyment, but sought, on the contrary, to draw closer in little things the bond which united him to his people.

From the hour of his arrival, Sir Edward Parry's heart was especially affected by the moral condition of his people. The free population were, religiously, almost on a level with the ignorant savages by whom they were surrounded. Immorality and drunkenness prevailed to a fearful extent: schools were unknown: the word of God had not been preached for four years, and all seemed to be living without God in the world. The first step towards the introduction of a better state of things was the establishment of a regular service on the Lord's day. There was no church nearer than Sydney, nor was there any chaplain in the settlement. Under these circumstances, Sir Edward fitted up a carpenter's shop in the village as a place of worship, and conducted the service himself. Had he been by profession a missionary, he could not have given himself to his spiritual work with more zeal or intelligence. At first, scarcely a score of men were found willing to attend the service, and none of the women. But by degrees the attendance became large and regular. And to this congregation of "bond and free" Sir Edward preached two sermons every Lord's day, one of them being original. He

seemed at home, we are told, the moment he entered the reading-desk, and his manner was characterized by deep reverence and feeling.

In private as well as in public did Sir Edward and Lady Parry seek the spiritual good of the colony, and their labours were not in vain. The temporal affairs of the settlement were restored to order and prosperity, its moral condition was vastly improved, nor were there wanting specific instances in which the word of God proved mighty to the conversion of sinners. "It was at the close of a beautiful sabbath-day," says the author of "The Prisoners of Australia," that I once sallied forth for an evening stroll. . . . I almost unconsciously wandered to a convict's hut, which stood on the borders of the coast. Attracted by the sound of voices, as if of children reading, I paused to listen; and although still too far from the dwelling to hear the subject of such discourse, I saw through the open doorway what was passing within. The father of the family, a convict, sat near the entrance, with a young child on his knee; while three older ones were grouped around him, reading from the Scriptures, which, from time to time, he explained to them. . . . Unwilling to intrude upon a family thus engaged, I returned home unperceived by those who had thus attracted and interested me; but on the following day, I heard from the lips of his wife the circumstances of this convict's transportation, etc. . . . Providentially, he had been assigned to the service of the Agricultural Company, and, under the Christian teaching of Sir Edward Parry, both he and his wife had, humanly speaking, been led to see the folly of worldly wickedness, and the deep importance of those better things which now formed their highest privilege and consola-

tion. . . . These blessings were among the many fruits of the missionary exertions of Sir Edward Parry and his now sainted lady, who both lived in the grateful affections of many a chastened heart, long after they had ceased to take a personal share in the interests of that far distant colony."

When, in 1846, Sir Edward Parry was appointed captain superintendent of the Royal Clarence Yard, and of the naval hospital at Haslar, he pursued the same path of usefulness, and with similar results. Not a few seamen owed to him, under God, their very souls.

As it was with Sir Edward Parry, the sailor, so was it with Sir Henry Havelock, the soldier. From the time of his landing in India, he sought the moral and spiritual welfare of his men. And how much better was it thus to diffuse his light among others, than to withdraw it to shine the more brightly in monastic solitude, where no wanderer's feet should be guided by it into the way of peace!

The Burmese war of the following year supplies an illustration, both of the manner of his devotion to the good of his men, and of the effects which it produced. In the city of Rangoon, which was taken by the English, there was a famous heathen temple devoted to the service of Boodh. Of a chamber in this temple Havelock obtained possession. All around were images of Boodh, in the usual position, sitting with the legs gathered up, and crossed, and the hands resting on the lap, in symbol and expression of repose. Abominable idolatries had often been witnessed there, but it needed no ceremonial cleansings to make it fit for Christian psalmody and prayer. An officer relates that, as he was wandering round about the pagoda on

one occasion, he heard the sound, strange enough, as he thought, of singing. The officer determined to follow the sound to its source. At last he reached the chamber, and what should meet his eye but Havelock, with his Bible and hymn-book before him, and more than a hundred men seated around him, giving earnest heed to his words!

"England, thy soldier brave in fight,
With his men of warrior mould,
Who had won the rampart's foe-lined height,
And crushed the proud stronghold,

"Whose victor shouts had rent the air,
Wide borne o'er hill and plain,
'Twas they who devoutly worshipped there,
In the idol's empty fane."

In every idol's lap there was a lamp to illumine the dark chamber. "There they were, those dumb but significant lamp-bearers, in constant use; and they were there, we may well be assured, to suggest stirring thoughts to the lieutenant and his men. How well the 115th Psalm would be understood there! How impressively some parts of the first chapter of Romans would be explained! How earnestly the prayer would be offered that the Burmese might be led, through the power of the Holy Ghost, to cast these and all other idols to the moles and to the bats! How gratefully would thanksgiving be offered that he, who is our God, is the God of salvation, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The fruits of such endeavours as these to bring his men under the influence of Christian principle were palpable to all. Whilst they were in Burmah, the army was one day suddenly apprised of the near approach of the enemy. The general, Sir Archibald Campbell, sent in great haste to order the men of a particular corps to occupy at once a prescribed post.

Imminent as was the danger, the order was to no purpose; for the men of that corps were so many of them intoxicated, that they were unfit for duty. The position was embarrassing, and would presently have become serious. The general knew this well, and he knew too how probably it could best, at least in part, be met. "Then," said he, when told that his former order was unavailing,—"then call out Havelock's saints; they are never drunk, and Havelock is always ready." The bugle sounded; they were immediately under arms; and the general's object was accomplished by the enemy being repulsed.

Havelock's efforts to do good to his men were not spasmodic and occasional; they were his life-long labour and joy. A gentleman, who passed through Cabul when the English army was there, states that he attended one of the meetings of the congregation of pious soldiers, and says that he shall never forget the thrilling sensation he felt in that romantic position, while the men stood up and sang with heart and soul the 100th Psalm, as Havelock gave out the words—

> "Ye nations round the earth, rejoice,
> Before the Lord, your Sovereign King;
> Serve him with cheerful heart and voice,
> With all your tongues his glories sing."

When this gentleman heard, soon after, of the brave defence of Jellalabad by these troops and their comrades, his mind involuntarily reverted to the little band of Christian soldiers surrounding Havelock in the room at Cabul, and he thought that men thus nerved with the vigour of Christian principle and devotion were prepared to face an enemy and overcome any difficulty. On the completion of the works, Havelock suggested to General Sale the propriety of

assembling the whole garrison for the purpose of offering up thanks to Almighty God, "who had in his mercy enabled them to complete the fortifications that were necessary for their protection." The suggestion was approved, and the necessary command given. "There stood those brave-hearted and hard-handed men, awaiting the direction that might come next. 'Let us pray,' said a well-known voice. It was Havelock's, 'Let us pray;' and down before the presence of the great God those soldiers reverently bowed, one and all of them, whilst at the impulse of a devout and grateful heart he poured forth supplication and praise in the name of the great High Priest."

In the town of Great Yarmouth, there died, in 1843, a humble sempstress, of whom one of the great organs of English literature wrote in these strong terms:—"It is the business of literature to make such a life stand out from the masses of ordinary existence with something of the distinctness with which a lofty building uprears itself in the confusion of a distant view. It should be made to attract the eyes, to excite the hearts of all persons who think the welfare of their fellow-mortals an object of interest or duty; it should be included in collections of biography, and chronicled in the high places of history; men should be taught to estimate it as that of one whose philanthropy has entitled her to renown; and children to associate the name of SARAH MARTIN with those of Howard, Buxton, Fry —the most benevolent of mankind."

Sarah Martin; born June, 1791; died August, 1843.

In the beginning of this century, English jails were, in general, academies of crime; and through their instrumentality, the law itself was the principal

teacher of the "science of law-breaking." Yarmouth is said to have been one of the last places in the kingdom to become convinced of this fact. The doors were simply locked upon the prisoners; their time was given to gaming, swearing, fighting, playing, and bad language. There was no divine worship in the jail on Sundays, nor any respect paid to that holy day. The whole place was filthy, confined, unhealthy; and in the course of a few years, Sarah Martin provided for all the most important objects of prison discipline, moral and intellectual tuition, occupation during imprisonment, and employment after discharge. Whilst great and good men, at a distance, unknown to her, were inquiring and disputing as to the way and the order in which these very results were to be attained, here was a poor woman, who was herself actually personally accomplishing them all. She had to contend with many difficulties that are now unknown. Prison discipline was then in its infancy: everything she did was conceived in the best spirit, and considering the time and the means at her command, could scarcely have been improved.

And who was Sarah Martin, that she should be able to do all this? A woman of no rank, of no wealth, of no genius, of no learning,—a poor Norfolk dressmaker, with the love of Christ in her heart. Faith in Christ made her a philanthropist. The love of Christ constrained her both to piety and benevolence. But, at the outset, she formed no great schemes, and sought no great patronage; she simply performed "the duty which was nearest to her." At every step of her onward progress, her principle seems to have been to attend to "what her hands found to do," and to "do what she could." The Sunday-school was her first

field of labour. The workhouse attracted her attention at the same time; and in 1810, being only in the twentieth year of her age, her desire was gratified by obtaining admission to see a young woman who was ill.

In 1819, an unnatural mother was committed to jail for cruelly beating her own child. Sarah Martin went to the jail, passed into the dark porch which overhung the entrance, and, in a timid, modest manner, asked permission to see her. It was refused; there was "a lion in the way." But the warm-hearted girl was too well assured of her own purposes to be daunted; and, upon a second application she was admitted. The imprisoned mother "was surprised at the sight of a stranger." "When I told the woman," says Miss Martin, "the motive of my visit—her guilt and her need of God's mercy, etc.,—she burst into tears and thanked me." These tears and thanks gave the young philanthropist courage. "I read to her," she adds, "the twenty-third chapter of Luke," which contains the story of the malefactor, who, although suffering justly by man's judgment, found mercy from the Saviour.

After this introduction to a life of mercy within prison walls, the door was never shut against her. "There does not appear to have been any instance of a prisoner long refusing to take advantage of her instructions. Men entered the prison, saucy, shallow, self-conceited, full of cavils and objections, which Sarah Martin was singularly clever in meeting; but in a few days the most stubborn, and those who had refused the most peremptorily, either to be employed or to be instructed, would beg to be allowed to take their part in the general cause. Once within the

circle of her influence, the effect was curious. Men, old in years, as well as in crime, might be seen striving, for the first time in their lives, to hold a pen, or bending hoary heads over primers and spelling-books, or studying to commit to memory some precept taken from the Holy Scriptures. Young rascals, as impudent as they were ignorant, beginning with one verse, went on to long passages; and even the dullest were enabled by perseverance to furnish their minds and memories with from two to five verses every day."

"She was no titular Sister of Charity," to use the words of a prison inspector, "but was silently felt and acknowledged to be one, by the many outcast and destitute persons who received encouragement from her lips, and relief from her hands, and by the few who were witnesses of her good works."

Vanderkemp; born at Rotterdam, 1748; died in South Africa, Dec. 15, 1811.

John Theodore Vanderkemp was, for sixteen years, a dashing officer of dragoons. He was a profane infidel, and the slave of vice and ungodliness. On marrying, his character improved outwardly; but his infidelity was only confirmed by his intercourse with the deists of Edinburgh, while studying medicine in that city. After a few years of medical practice in Holland, he retired from active occupation, intending to devote the residue of his days to literary pursuits. But the God, whom he knew not, had other work for him to do. After much restless thinking on the subject of religion, he concluded that it was beyond the reach of his reason to discover the true road to virtue and happiness. This, he says, he confessed to God, and owned that he was like a blind man who had lost his

way, and who waited in the hope that some benevolent person would pass by and show him the right path.

His hope was realized, not, however, in the first place, by the still small voice, but by the fire and tempest. By a sudden storm he was bereft of his wife and only child, while his own life was rescued as by a miracle. The Sabbath after, he was found in the sanctuary, a broken-hearted mourner. The world was no longer to him what it had been: his home was dark and desolate; and there was something in the character of Jesus Christ that drew him to the gospel for comfort. The sophistries by which his intellect had been warped were gradually destroyed, and within a few short months the gospel was understood, believed, and loved.

Dr. Vanderkemp, now a Christian, could no longer live to himself. He became a missionary to the heathen at fifty years of age, shrinking from no danger and from no toil. During his sojourn in London, on his way to Africa, he passed a brick-field; and it struck him that a great boon might be conferred on the Hottentots by teaching them to build better houses; in order to which it would first be needful to teach them the art of brick-making. Accordingly he sought leave to join the labourers, and for some weeks the venerable apprentice sweltered among the brick-kilns, lightening his labour by the thought of Africa. And when he arrived among the people of his choice, he consecrated himself to their service with the ardour of a lover and the zeal of an apostle. Undismayed by their offensive habits, he took up his abode in the midst of them, and often without any European comfort—sometimes without hat, or shoes or stockings—he not only taught their children, and preached to them

the gospel, but, "labouring with his own hands," he showed them how, by their own industry, they might support themselves.

"Dr. Vanderkemp was a man of exalted genius and learning," says Mr. Moffat. "He had mingled with courtiers. He had been an alumnus of the Universities of Leyden and Edinburgh. He had obtained plaudits for his remarkable progress in literature, in philosophy, divinity, physic, and the military art. He was not only a profound student in the ancient languages, but in many of the modern European tongues, even to that of the Highlanders of Scotland, and had distinguished himself in the armies of his earthly sovereign. Yet this man, constrained by the love of Christ, could cheerfully lay aside all his honours, mingle with savages, bear their sneers, and continually condescend to serve the meanest of his troublesome guests, take the axe, the sickle, the spade, and the mattock, lie down on the place where dogs repose, and spend nights with his couch drenched with rain, the cold wind bringing his fragile house about his ears. Though annoyed by the nightly visits of hungry hyenas, though compelled to wander about in quest of lost cattle, and exposed to the caprice of those whose characters were stains on human nature, whisperings occasionally reaching his ears that murderous plans were in progress for his destruction, he calmly proceeded with his benevolent efforts, and, to secure his object, would stoop, with the meekness of wisdom, to please and propitiate those rude and wayward children of the desert whom he sought to bless."

In 1806, the colony passed from the Dutch into the hands of the English; and, under the protection of Sir David Baird, the mission of Dr. Vanderkemp so

prospered, that, in 1810, the settlement at Bethelsdorp contained nearly a thousand inhabitants, all receiving Christian instruction. Mats and baskets were made in considerable quantities, and sold in the surrounding country. Salt was also manufactured, and bartered for wheat; and, by sawing, soap-boiling, and wood-cutting, the people exerted themselves for an independent maintenance. Dr. Vanderkemp, who supported himself as a missionary with scarcely any charge to the society, spent nearly a thousand pounds of his patrimony in the ransom of slaves; and his representations to Lord Caledon were the first in a series of movements on behalf of the oppressed aborigines, which, in 1828, ended in their obtaining rights and privileges in all respects equal to those of the Dutch and English settlers.

There is one means of well-doing which is within the reach of all, but which, it may be safely affirmed, is not valued or practised as it ought; it is intercessory prayer. "I thank God," wrote Paul to Timothy, "that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."* "Now we live," he wrote to his converts at Thessalonica, "if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

* 2 Timothy i. 3.

to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."*

It was not only on behalf of those whom he had seen in the flesh that Paul thus offered intercessory prayer "without ceasing," but for others as well. "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love."† Paul had not yet been to Rome when he wrote to the Christians in that city, "God is my witness, ... that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."‡ Prayer was, with the apostle Paul, no apology for the neglect of other means of doing good, but neither was his incessant activity in labour an apology for the neglect of prayer. All his works were "begun, continued, and ended in God." The command which he was divinely commissioned to send forth for the obedience of others, "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men," was habitually and heartily obeyed by himself.

The memoirs of the Rev. George Wagner contain many instances of his constant use of prayer for others, and of the delight which he took in it. "Intercessory prayer," he said, "is of all kinds the *highest kind* of prayer. Do you ask the reason?" We answer, because it is the most *unselfish*. True religion is always an unselfish thing. One great purpose of the gospel is to destroy self, and to give us the victory over it. . . . . But there is another thought, which may serve, perhaps, above every other, to impress our minds with the blessedness and elevation of inter-

*1 Thes. iii. 8—13. †Col. ii. 1, 2. ‡Rom. i. 9.

cessory prayer; and that is, that it is the only kind of prayer which our great High Priest now offers within the veil. Even when he was on earth, nearly all his recorded prayers are those of intercession; and now, at his Father's right hand, he offers no other prayers than these. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' When, therefore, you plead with earnest intercession for others, it is then that your prayers are most like your Saviour's—then, that they are the nearest echo of his—then that you are engaged in the selfsame way in which he is now engaged in heaven, and that your hidden life is most like his glorified life."

These examples are all illustrations of obedience to the command, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." * "Whatsoever," includes the smaller as well as the larger services performed for the glory of God and the good of man. The service performed by the little captive maid to her leprous master is not overshadowed by the greater service that was performed by the prophet that was in Israel. "Tertius," the amanuensis of an apostle, was permitted to record his own name † in the holy book, which contained the inspired thoughts of his master; the scribe's work was mechanical, but his heart was in sympathy with it, and the Holy Spirit has placed his name in honourable fellowship with that of Paul.

In the Old Testament there is another amanuensis, named Baruch, whose services and trials received still more explicit notice from the God of the prophet whom he served; and few chapters of the book of Jeremiah are more instructive than the brief one which contains the message of God to Baruch,‡—

* Ecclesiastes ix. 10. † Romans xvi. 22. ‡ Jeremiah xlv.

a message which came during a great crisis in the history of Israel and of the world. Jeremiah was commissioned to address himself to kings and nobles, to prophesy of coming judgments, and even to foretell the future destinies of surrounding empires and monarchies. And it was in the midst of these divine communications that God turned aside, as it were, from what we would call his great work, to direct his regards to the humble man who sat by Jeremiah's side, with pen in hand. The prophet's secretary, a mere instrument, as it would seem, of recording words, was not overlooked by that divine eye which was surveying all the nations around, and that divine mind which was exercising and pronouncing judgment on their destinies; and in the midst of those awful oracles which the hand of Baruch was recording, there came to Baruch himself a voice from God—a voice of love, at once searching, faithful, and tender, "Thus saith Jehovah unto thee, O Baruch!"

Though Baruch was the servant of another, he had a heart and soul of his own. He was not, like the pen which his hand wielded, insensible to the words which he was tracing on the scroll before him. His master was a man of sorrow and contention, and sometimes mourned over his lot bitterly; and the servant seems to have drunk of the master's spirit. "Thou didst say"—so runs the message of God to him—"Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." With a deep sorrow that was natural, there was mingled a want of submission to the will of God—to the doom which was impending over Jerusalem and Judea. Though his post was humble, he was a true Israelite, and everything that concerned Israel concerned him.

His own prospects, too, were blighted by the frowns of the court, when, as Jeremiah's scribe, he read in the ears of the nobles the words of the Lord; and they were doubly blighted by the predicted destruction of the land. The great One, who filleth heaven and earth with his presence, condescended to observe the sighing and the restlessness of Baruch's heart, and to send down a message that should quiet that heart and quell its tumult. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."

We are taught by this episode in the prophecy of Jeremiah, that however humble our place may be, either in the state or in the church, we are the distinct objects of the regard of our heavenly Father and Master, and to us his voice comes as directly as to the mightiest potentate in the universe. This is a blessed fact for the door-keepers of the house of God, for the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in the divine service, for the obscurest and humblest whose hand has aught to do with the work of God. Reader, whatever post you hold in the kingdom of heaven, whatever function you discharge, whether it be yours to teach a crowd or teach a single child, to minister the one cup of cold water or to consecrate treasures of gold and silver to your Saviour, God does not overlook you; his eye, his ear, his hand, are all open to bless you.

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to

every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. . . . After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. . . . Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents."*

The Christian's responsibility is in proportion to his means. Our Lord's parable reminds us of the proneness of those whose gifts are few to find in this circumstance an apology for the neglect of them. But the one talent is often a very precious contribution to the cause of truth and mercy. The writing of a single hymn, for example—such a hymn as has power to live—what a legacy to the church of God! The name of Edward Perronet is known to the world only as the author of the hymn, "All hail! the power of Jesus' name;" and to discover anything else respecting him, one must search diligently in the by paths of history. But this one noble contribution to the devotion of the Christian church was a great work. It was worth while to be born, to live, and to die, to do this one thing. "Forty years the heart may have been in battle, and one verse shall express the fruit of the

* Matthew xxv, 14, 15, 19, 24—28.

whole. One great hope may come to fruit only at the end of many years, and as the ripening of a hundred experiences. Thus born, a hymn is one of those silent ministers which God sends to those who are to be heirs of salvation. It enters into the tender imagination of childhood, and casts down upon the chambers of its thought a holy radiance, which shall never quite depart. It goes with the Christian, singing to him all the way, as if it were the airy voice of some guardian spirit. When darkness of trouble, settling fast, is shutting out every star, a hymn bursts through and brings light like a torch. It abides by our side in sickness; it goes forth with us in joy to syllable that joy; and thus, after a time, we clothe a hymn with the memories and associations of our own life."

It is related that the watchman of the Calais light-house was boasting of the brilliancy of his lantern, which can be seen many miles at sea, when a visitor said to him, "What if one of your lights should chance to go out?" "Never," he replied,—"impossible;" with a sort of consternation at the bare idea. "Sir," continued he, "yonder, where nothing can be seen by us, there are ships going to every part of the world; if to-night one of my burners were out, within a year would come a letter, perhaps from India, perhaps from some place I never heard of, saying, 'On such a night, at such an hour, your light burned dim; the watchman neglected his post, and vessels were in danger.' Ah, sir, sometimes in the dark night, in stormy weather, I look out to sea, and feel as if the eye of the whole world were looking at my light. Go out?—burn dim?—no, never." With similar feelings should every Christian shudder at the thought of proving negligent or unfaithful to his trust

as a light bearer in his own sphere, however humble or limited.

For the enlightenment of the world we need the stars as well as the sun and moon. "So also for the spiritual enlightenment of the world, God uses the lesser as well as the greater lights. If the man of genius or power, on whose lips tens of thousands are hanging for instruction, is called upon to shine for God, so likewise is the man of the smallest influence, and of the humblest capacity: even the labourer in the fields, the poor woman in her cottage home, and the child at its school. Christianity has ever been spread more by the gentle shining of many little lights than by the brilliant shining of a few greater ones. If you want a light at midnight, it is of no use to you that the sun is shining on the other side of the earth, or that a lamp is burning on the other side of the street. What you want is a flame, however feeble, which you can have near you, and ever ready to show you light. So also the gentle influence of the humble Christian shining hourly upon his neighbour, will do far more to christianize him than the wonderful works of the greatest man whose light does not reach him."*

There once resided on the west coast of Scotland a poor widow whose two sons had perished at sea. From the hour of her bereavement, she resolved to do "what she could" to save those who might be tossed on the billows which had engulfed her own children; and all that she could do was to put her small oil lamp at sunset into her cottage window, if peradventure its twinkle might be seen by the storm-driven mariner. And there it shone, that small and humble

* "Working for God," by Rev. F. Morse, M. A.

beacon, night after night, the widow's willing offering to the service of her fellow-creatures. "She did what she could." "Go thou and do likewise."

> "Nor let the meanest think his lamp too dim,
> In a dark world: the Lord hath need of *him*."

"A high place in the sight of God and man has the physician who remains on the battle-field after the conquering host has passed on, tending indiscriminately wounded friends and wounded foes; or who plies his task in a plague-stricken city, entering every house where a chalk mark on the door indicates that the infection is within. His is an honourable work. Angels, eyeing him as they pass, might envy him the work which he has got in the service of the common Lord. But every one of us might attain a rank as high, and do a work as beneficent. If broken limbs lie not in our way, broken spirits abound in our neighbourhood. Sick hearts are rife on the edges of our daily walk. Although we lack the skill necessary to cure a bodily ailment, we may all exercise the art of healing on diseases that are more deeply set. A loving heart and a wholesome tongue are a sufficient apparatus; and the instincts of a renewed nature should be ever ready to apply them in the time and place of need."

In the bloody strife of the battle-field there may be soldiers who concern themselves with their own safety more than with the conquest of the enemy; who studiously combine an all-engrossing desire to shield themselves from peril, with a prudent aim to hide their cowardice and save their good name from infamy. But where the true spirit of Christian well-doing exists, the Christian's aim will be not to give as little as possible, or to pray as little as possible, or to labour as little as possible,—it will not be to devote fragments of time

and of property to the service of God and man,—but to realize, without stint and without reserve, the apostolic affirmation and command, "Know ye not that .... ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." And in most expressive and characteristic form was this sin condemned of old.

"'Curse ye Meroz,' said the angel of the Lord.
What has Meroz done? Nothing.
Why then is Meroz to be cursed? Because Meroz did nothing.
What ought Meroz to have done? Come to the help of the Lord.
Could not the Lord do without Meroz? The Lord did do without Meroz.
Did the Lord, then, sustain any loss? No, but Meroz did.
Is Meroz then to be cursed? Yes, and that bitterly.
Is it right that a man should be cursed for doing nothing?
Yes, when he ought to do something."†

The spirit of self-denial goes hand in hand with the spirit of love in well-doing; and of self-denial, selfish as the world is, the history of the church of Christ affords bright and heroic examples in noble-hearted men who have forsaken home and civilized life, and have spent their days among brutal savages in what, but for the presence of Christ, would have been weariness and wretchedness, to bring these savages to the knowledge of God and to the possession of eternal life. Even within the borders of civilization, we find self-denial in well-doing practised by men and women, unknown to fame, in circumstances only less trying than those of Vanderkemp and Moffat among Bushmen and Bechuanas. And it should be remembered that the duty and the honour of this grace "have all the saints." Only let men know distinctly what self-denial is. In the matter of *giving*, for example, nothing that we can

* 1 Corinthians vi. 19, 20.
† Judges v. 23. Children's Missionary Record.

spare without feeling it can be brought under this name. "Liberality and self-denial," says Dean Alford, "are two very different things. The man of wealth, whose personal comfort and ease are quite independent of his charitable bestowals, may subscribe and give largely to a hundred charities: in so doing, he is performing a sacred duty, and that duty is liberality; but he is not self-denying. If, however, that same man, loving his ease, fond of his comforts, fastidious in his tastes, sacrifices that ease, suspends those comforts, offends those tastes, in real laborious personal contact with poverty and misery; is beneficent not only in matters which can be transacted through his chequebook, but in exertions which cost him time, which cost him perhaps painful revulsions of feeling, which cost him sacrifice of pride and exclusiveness,—then I should say that he is not merely liberal, but self-denying also; that he has at any rate begun to walk in the path which his Saviour trod before him, who, from the spotless purity of the Godhead and the light unapproachable, came among sinners, and bore with them, and witnessed their vileness, and touched their loathsomeness. Practical self-denial does not belong alone to the wealthy: it is required of us all. It is the undoubted duty of persons whom God has placed above poverty and wretchedness, to flow forth to those who are less outwardly blessed than themselves, in personal acts and words of kindness; to put aside their tastes, and cherished habits, and worldly pride, and forget themselves in their Christian duty."

Our Lord has connected the most solemn sanctions of the great day with earthly acts of well-doing neglected or performed in his name, and for his sake. "I was

an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." . . . . "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."* In his poem of "A poor wayfaring Man of Grief," Mr. James Montgomery has affectingly embodied the spirit of these divine words. The wayfarer crosses the poet's path, and again and again sues so humbly for relief that the poet's heart is never able to answer, "Nay." In one sorrow after another he sympathizes with him, and out of one difficulty after another he delivers him. The test of his love and compassion becomes more severe each time; but with ever increasing zeal and self-denial, he ministers the needed help, till "to try his friendship's utmost zeal," the suffering wayfarer asked him if he would die for him? The flesh was weak, but the free spirit cried, "I will." And then he found out for whom he had done all this.

"In a moment to my view
The stranger darted from disguise,
The token in his hands I knew,
My Saviour stood before mine eyes.
He spake; and my poor name he named:
'Of me thou hast not been ashamed,
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou didst them unto me.'"

* Matthew xxv. 35, 36, 42, 43.

PART THE SECOND.

CONFLICT.

CHAPTER I.—CONFLICT WITH SIN.
CHAPTER II.—CONFLICT WITH DESPONDENCY AND DOUBT.
CHAPTER III.—CONFLICT WITH SUFFERING AND DEATH.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

EPHESIANS vi. 10, 11, 12.

"Breast the wave, Christian,
When it is strongest;
Watch for day, Christian,
When the night's longest.
Onward and onward still,
Urge thine endeavour:
The rest that remaineth
Shall be for ever.

Fight the fight, Christian:
Jesus is o'er thee,
Run the race, Christian:
Heaven is before thee.
He who hath promised
Faltereth never:
The love of eternity
Flows on for ever.

Raise the eye, Christian,
Just as it closeth:
Lift the heart, Christian,
Ere it reposeth.
Thee from the love of Christ
Nothing shall sever,
Mount when thy work is done,
Praise him for ever."

CHAPTER I.

CONFLICT WITH SIN.

CONTENTS.—The language of war—Heathen speculations—The devil—Two extremes—The temptation of Christ—Can we distinguish the assaults of Satan?—Luther, Bunyan, Job, Peter—How to use the sword of the Spirit—No compromise—Example—Conflict with inward sin—Asceticism no cure—Madame Guyon—Death to sin—Colonel Gardiner—Dr. Payson, Pearce, Charles Simeon, Chalmers, Sarah Martin, Bunyan—O wretched man!—Means of deliverance—The spider and the toad—Cultivation of the positive virtues—Self-denial—Andrew Fuller—The untenanted heart—Besetting sins—Charles Simeon—Obsta principiis—A parable—Little sins—Fasting and prayer—Payson—Simeon—Union of humiliation and cheerfulness—The Christian life a battle and a hymn.

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—ROMANS viii. 3, 4, 13.

"Put off each cumbrous weight;
Renounce each darling sin:
He must be free as air,
Who would Faith's victory win.
With patience gird the soul:
Maintain the strife begun:
Be firm unto the end:—
On, to the foe, then, on."

AVELING.

"'Tis not the skirmish of an hour:
Sin yields not at a blow:
For pride of heart is ill to slay;
And what seemed overcome to-day
Will be to-morrow's foe."

THOLUCK'S "LIGHT FROM THE CROSS."

CONFLICT WITH SIN.

THE records of the gospel of peace are instinct with the language of war. "I have fought a good fight," said the apostle Paul; and his words possess a truer sublimity than Cæsar's famed dispatch, "I came, I saw, I conquered," inasmuch as the subject of the one is sublimer than the subject of the other. The battles of this world will soon be forgotten, except so far as they contribute to the ends of God's providence. The battles of the soul will never be forgotten: their dangers and their victories will be recounted throughout eternity.

Never did hero fight more bravely than the apostle Paul. And never has man been better entitled than he to say at the end of his life, "I have fought a good fight." He had fought with fiery and savage persecutors, and though he raised no arm against them, he overcame them by "the irresistible might of weakness." He had fought with the ignorance, and errors, and sins of the world; and though their giant hosts were too much for his feeble arm, he deemed it no folly to assail them. That ancient Book with which he was familiar from childhood, contained a story in which he could see as in an allegory the picture of his own position. The disparity between Goliath and David was not more marked than the disparity between the massive and hoary superstitions of the

world and Paul their assailant; but, as of old, the arm and sling of David were nerved and guided by the God of heaven, so were now the mind and tongue and pen of Paul. And the weapons of his warfare were mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. Paul had to fight at the same time with the corruptions of his own heart; and his deep consciousness of their power is shown in the language in which he describes his warfare with them: "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."*

But these are not the only enemies with which this spiritual hero fought, as we learn from his instructions to the Christians of Ephesus—"Put on the whole armour of God."† Do not enter into battle with your adversaries naked and defenceless, but take to you *armour:* do not cover one portion and leave another exposed, but put on the *whole* armour: do not resort to any arsenal of your own, but put on the whole armour *of God;* "in order that ye may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil," the great enemy of man, a fiend veteran and malignant. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood." It is not the wrestling on equal terms of potsherd with potsherd. It is an unequal contest; because it is with spirits, fallen spirits, who once occupied positions of rank and prerogative in heaven, and still retain, it may be, a similar place among the hosts of apostate angels. Our conflict is with "the world-rulers of this darkness," wary and vengeful antagonists which have

* 1 Corinthians ix. 26, 27. † Ephesians vi. 11.

acquired a special dominion on earth out of which they are loath to be dislodged. These "spirits of evil" have to be encountered not on the open field of the world merely, but also on "high" or "heavenly places," the ransomed and consecrated church of God, which they attempt to pollute, divide, and overthrow, and whose members they are continually tempting to sin and apostasy.

From this and many other Scriptures "it is plain that fallen spirits have a vast and mysterious agency in the world, and that in many ways inscrutable to man, they lord it over ungodliness, shaping, deepening, or prolonging the means and methods of spiritual subjugation."*

Ages before the coming of Christ, men had speculated on the moral disorders of the universe. They saw good and evil standing side by side in the world, companions everywhere, yet irreconcilable foes; evil apparently the stronger because the more prevalent. Their moral instincts taught them that the same fountain could not send forth sweet water and bitter—that the same being could not be the author both of good and of evil. And from this simple argument they passed to the conclusion that there are two co-equal deities, or at least co-equal principles; and to each of the two, the one good, the other evil, they ascribed a corresponding progeny. In the poetical or mystical form which the theory usually assumed, good was identified with light, and evil with darkness. Erroneous and dreamy as was this theory, speculation, unaided by divine teaching, could scarcely come nearer the truth than it did in this instance.

The Bible tells that there is a God with whom

* Dr. Eadie: "Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians."

all goodness originated, and a devil with whom originated evil. But these are not co-equal deities. The one is the Creator, the other is the creature; and this creature was created holy with the image of his Maker. How he fell into sin we have no means of knowing. It is a mystery which no human intellect has yet fathomed. But that he did fall—that since his fall he has devoted his mighty energies to the propagation of sin, and that, with legions of spirits whom he has drawn with him into the vortex of rebellion, he is now busily occupied in tempting men to evil—we believe on the authority of a divine testimony.

With some the devil is only a personification of the principle of evil. But they might almost as well say that God is the personification of the principle of good. There is a distinct living personality ascribed to the devil throughout Holy Scripture. But, from the extreme of denying all real living existence to Satan, some have passed to the opposite extreme of regarding, or seeming to regard, all the evil that is in the world as the direct work of Satan. That is, when man does an evil thing, it is not man that does it but the devil in him. When man's will is perverse, and chooses wrong and rejects good, it is not man himself that does so: his will is under the despotic control of the author of evil. It is scarcely man's will at all, it is the devil's will acting through him. Human evil-doing is, properly speaking, diabolical evil-doing. It is human only in form: man is but the instrument, the devil is the real agent. So far is this notion carried, that we might almost suppose that men's minds are now as passive in the hands of Satan as the bodies of men were when possessed by evil spirits in the days of our Lord. But

this must be a great mistake. If it were at all according to truth, man would be no sinner in the commission of his own sins: his sins would be misfortunes, not crimes: the only true sinner in a world of sinners would be the devil himself.

Between these two extremes of making the devil nothing, and making him everything, there lie all shades, not so much of opinion as of feeling in regard to the wicked one and his work. The points that seem essential to truth in regard to it are, on the one hand, that he is a real living being, and that his angels are real living beings, actively engaged in the temptation of man; and, on the other hand, that when man is tempted successfully, yields to the temptation and does the evil, the sin of yielding and of doing is his own. It is a sin on the part of the devil to seek to draw men into evil: it is a sin on the part of man to be drawn into evil. Whatever amount of influence the tempter puts forth, it is never such as so to overpower the tempted that he is without blame in yielding. He has no such power as God has to touch the innermost springs of the will and the soul. His power is the same, in kind at least, as that of human tempters. By the voice and otherwise, they present to each other motives and inducements to sin. Without the voice, in some way to us unknown, he too presents motives and inducements to sin. In both cases it is by the presentation or suggestion of evil motives that the temptation is effected. The devil may have immensely readier access to the human mind than men have. But our spiritual nature is not at his mercy; and whatever hand Satan has in our sins, it is still true that we are successfully tempted only when "we are drawn away of our own lusts and enticed."

Of the "stratagems" or "wiles" of the devil we have many instances in the narratives of Holy Scripture. He unsettled the mind of Eve by representing God as jealous of the happiness of his own creatures, and yet too indulgent to punish their sins; he stirred up the royal and warlike aspirations of David to take a military census and force a conscription as the basis of a standing army; he inflamed the avaricious and sordid spirit of Judas; and, more wicked and daring than all, he attempted to draw the Son of God himself into sin.

The temptation of Christ in the wilderness is one of the most prominent facts in his history, and one of the most mysterious. The supernatural circumstances connected with it form but a small part of the mystery. His Godhead and his sinlessness separate him so far from our condition that we are apt to imagine that his temptation was unreal. Yet we may be assured that that was no mock fight between Christ and Satan which the Gospels record. Christ, as we have often to remind ourselves, was a true man, and, as such, he was assailed at every point at which human nature is vulnerable. He was "*in all points* tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

There is no part of our Lord's life that has a more constant bearing on our daily conflicts with sin than the history of his temptation. The devil still goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He may find them, as he found Christ, in the very act of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and along with it such testimony as Christians now have, that they are the sons of God; but he has no respect

* Hebrews iv. 15.

to God's will or to the soul's sanctity to deter him from intruding even there with his foulest temptations. John Bunyan places the Valley of Humiliation immediately after the Palace Beautiful in the way to heaven. And from this palace, where Christian's soul was filled with joy and peace, and whence he obtained a distant view of the Delectable Mountains and the promised land, he had to descend into the Valley of Humiliation to encounter Apollyon in deadly conflict. No present spiritual attainment or enjoyment renders us secure from the presence and assaults of the devil.

But can we distinguish the assaults of Satan from those temptations in which it may be supposed there is nothing but the hand of a fellow-man and the corruption of our own hearts? Perhaps we cannot. Luther saw the direct work of the wicked one in every evil under the sun. "Whatever resistance he met with; whatever obstacle to divine grace he found in his own heart or in external circumstances; whatever event he saw plainly cast in the way of the progress of the gospel; whatever outbreak of a bad or unamiable spirit occurred in the church; whatever strange phenomenon of nature wore a malevolent aspect;" the hand of the devil was in it all.

"The Lord God sends no misfortune into the world," he said, "except through Satan, from whom comes all affliction, misery, and disease." But if in this Luther went beyond the "warranty of Holy Scripture," he had the highest authority for saying, "Satan shoots dreadful thoughts, like fiery darts, into the hearts of those who fear God." And of this he had his own bitter experience. "It is reported of him, that being tempted to make away with himself, the temptation was so fierce and pressing upon him, that

falling into an agony, and as it were struggling for life, he had no other way to defend himself, but, during the conflict, by frequently urging and repeating over and over again to himself the sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt do no murder: Thou shalt do no murder:' that so by encountering this fiery dart, with the continually renewed evidence of the sin offered full and fresh to his faith, in the peremptory express words of the precept, he might relieve his labouring mind against the present violence of that impious suggestion."

Of this class of temptations John Bunyan had a bitter and varied experience. "For about the space of a month," he says, speaking of the commencement of his Christian life, "a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before. It came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another; first, all my comfort was taken from me; then darkness seized upon me; after which, whole floods of blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, were poured upon my spirit to my great confusion and astonishment."

The poor tempted soul was delivered at this time; but after a brief interval, temptation returned in another form. "Sell Christ, sell him, sell him, sell him," was sounded in his ears as fast as man can speak; and Bunyan was tortured as upon the rack; and, trembling with dread lest he should consent thereto, he bent the whole force of his being with unutterable agony against it. At length, one morning there seemed to pass deliberately through his heart, as if he were tired of resistance, this thought, "Let him go if he will;" and from that moment

down he fell, "as a bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful despair." An experience which probably suggested the description of the passage of Christian through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. "I took notice that now poor Christian was so confounded that he did not know his own voice; and thus I perceived it. Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and, whispering, suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put Christian more to it than anything that he met before, even to think that he should now blaspheme Him that he loved so much before; yet if he could have helped it he would not have done it. But he had not the discretion either to stop his ears or to know from whence those blasphemies came."

Bunyan, it is true, was a man of vivid and almost restless imagination, and he had been a man of wicked thoughts and wicked deeds. But this will not account for the blasphemies which rendered two years of his life miserable, at a time when, through the grace of God, the whole strength of his soul was set against sin, and his conscience was sensitively alive to all that was offensive to his God and Saviour. Evil thoughts could not spring out of Christ's soul, for he was perfectly sinless; nor could they originate in his imagination, for it was constitutionally perfect, and abundantly replenished with forms of heavenly beauty. And yet *he* was assailed by evil thoughts; and these could only come from the personal suggestions of the evil one. And this is the judgment which Bunyan pronounced on his own case many years after, although

at the time "he had not the discretion either to stop his ears or to know from whence those blasphemies came."

On this point the experience of men recorded in Holy Scripture, and of others, illustrate each other. "Take Job, for example," says Dr. Cheever. "If a man say, this experience of Bunyan is all a delusion, it is merely his own imagination tormenting him, there never was or could be such a reality: we say, Beware: this experience of Bunyan has its original in the word of God itself; it is countersigned, as it were, in Job's history. Or if a man say this experience of Job is figurative; no man ever experienced such dealings in reality: we say, So far from this, other men *have* experienced such discipline; it is countersigned, as it were, and illustrated in the experience of a modern Christian. It is true that in the account of Job the steps are marked by the divine hand; but in the account of Bunyan also the steps are just as clear, with that single exception. They are almost as clear as if it had been said, as in the case of Job, There was a man in the land of England whom God would take and prepare for the greatest usefulness of all men living. And Satan said, Let me take Bunyan, and I will tempt him from his integrity, and make him curse God, and deny his very being. And God said, Let Satan try his uttermost upon this man; and the awful discipline shall only prepare him for greater usefulness and glory. So Satan went forth, and by the space of two years filled the soul of Bunyan with distresses and temptations, and the fiery darts of the wicked one. Is not this the very truth of the matter? You may say that with Job Satan's temptations were all external, while with Bunyan they were mostly inward. Yes, but let

it be remembered that Job had a bosom companion, a treacherous, unbelieving, discontented wife, who would, in the place of the devil, do all the whisperings and the blasphemous suggestions that were needed. Yea, while Job was passing through the valley of temptation, this woman was as a fiend at his ear: 'Curse God and die,' to make it as the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Bunyan, on the other hand, had a good wife, who would do no part of the work of the tempter, but would shield her husband, and help him on to God."

Christ warned Peter that Satan would try him to the utmost of his malignity and power. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."* "This is the very renewal of the scene in the Old Testament in regard to Job. Let me but lay my hand, says this sarcastic and malignant devil, upon this Peter, this disciple so hot and zealous for his Lord and Master, and I will make him blaspheme his very Saviour. I will make him curse God and die. Yes; and the devil did succeed in making him curse God. Awful, awful truth! Fearful revelation of the meaning of our Saviour in his warning to Peter, and of the dreadful power of this tempter of mankind! But he did not succeed in making him die, nor in utterly putting out the light of faith and life within him. No, there again was Satan disappointed, and out of evil still was brought forth good. But why, how, by what agency? Oh, how beautiful, how precious is the explanation! 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; *but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*' So thou shalt yet be saved and strengthened, even though thou shalt deny thy

* Luke xxii. 31.

Lord; and 'when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Ah yes, that was the reason I have prayed for thee. And what saint is there that Christ does not pray for? So, if our trust be in him, we are all safe, but not otherwise. And now who does not see that in Peter's case, just as in Bunyan's, these dreadful storms of temptation were permitted to overwhelm him, that even out of that terrible experience, out of those very depths of Satan, the tempted and fallen disciple might gain a strength in the end, through the good Spirit of God, which not another of the brethren, except perhaps Paul, ever manifested? And hence you can trace in Peter's rich instructive epistles a knowledge of the great adversary, and a warning and a vigilance against him, that sprang from Peter's own dreadful wrestlings with him. Yea, those very blasphemies that Satan made Peter utter turned out to be the most effective weapons in remembrance against himself."

If there be temptations in reference to which it would be difficult to say whether there be any tempter other than the human—temptations in which our own hearts are both tempted and tempting—it is still a solemn and alarming thought that Satan *may* have his hand in them. There is, perhaps, no temptation in reference to which we can say with certainty, "Satan is not here." And the possibility of his presence and agency should awaken immediate concern. "I am thankful," says one, "that the existence of Satan has been revealed. Could I tell you, man of business, that in your warehouse there lurks a wretch, whose constant aim is to plunder your property and alienate your supporters, I should lay you under a weight of

obligation and gratitude: you would thank me for information so important and so invaluable. So with reference to this implacable foe to God and man. I thank God that he has told me of Satan's existence, and provided a panoply against which the artillery of hell is powerless."

In our Lord's conflict with Satan we have an example of steadfast resistance to evil without truce or compromise. And the Christian who would stand in the evil day must do likewise. The smallest concession may prove the one fatal step that shall be irretrievable. "I have heard it reported," says Dr. South, and whether the story be fact or fable the moral is the same, "of a certain monk or prelate, who for a long time together was continually urged and solicited, or rather worried and pursued, with three foul and horrid temptations: namely, to commit murder, or fornication, or to be drunk; till at length, quite wearied out with the restless, vexatious importunity of the tempter, he pitches upon the sin of drunkenness, as the least of the three, to avoid his solicitation to the other two. This was the course he took to rid himself of a vehement temptation. But the tempter, who was much the better artist of the two, knew how to make the very same course he took to decline it, an effectual means to push it on and enforce it. For, having once prevailed and carried his point so far as to bring him to be drunk, he quickly brought him in the strength thereof to commit both the other sins too. Such are we, when God abandons us to ourselves and our own deluded and deluding judgment. Whereas, had this poor wretch, under his unhappy circumstances, betaken himself to frequent prayer and

fasting, with a vigilant and severe shunning all occasions of sin, such especially as either his natural temper or his inactive way of living put him in most danger of, I dare undertake that, following such a course, he would neither have worn out his knees with praying, nor his body with fasting, before God would have given him an answer of peace, and a full conquest over his temptations. We should upon no terms account any sin small; for whatsoever it may be reckoned, if compared with others of a higher guilt and malignity, yet still, considered absolutely in itself, it is not so small, but that it is an act of rebellion against the Supreme Lord and Governor of the universe, by a direct violation of his law; not so small, but that by the same law it merits damnation to the sinner in the eternal destruction of his soul and body; nor, lastly, so small, but that as it merits, so it would actually and infallibly inflict the same upon him, had not the Son of God himself shed his blood and laid down his very life, both as a satisfaction for the sin, and a ransom for the sinner. And, if all this must be owned and submitted to as uncontrollable truth, from what topic of reason or religion can the most acute disputant argue for the smallness of any sin? Nevertheless, admitting (without granting) that a sin were never so small, yet certain it is, that the greatest and the foulest sins, which the corrupt nature of man is capable of committing, generally enter upon the soul by very small and scarcely observable instances at first. So that, of all the courses which a man in such a state can take, this of capitulating, and, as it were, making terms with the devil, is the most senseless and dangerous: no man having ever yet driven a saving bargain with this great truckler for

souls, by exchanging guilts, or bartering one sin for another."

In one respect, Jesus Christ has left us no example,—and it is his glory that he has not. He has left us no example of conflict with inward or actual sin. He was born without sin, and he was successful in repulsing every assault that was made on his inborn purity. "Man-soul" in his person (to use the language of Bunyan's "Holy War") was never entered by "Diabolus." The "famous and stately castle" within it—"for strength, it may be called a palace; for pleasantness, a paradise; for largeness, a place so copious as to contain all the world"—never surrendered to the arch-assailant: his heart was never other than a most perfect temple of the Most High.

How far otherwise it is with Christians may be seen in such apostolic precepts as these:—"Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: . . . in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."* The work of purifying, which is here prescribed and insisted on, is one that requires wisdom, earnestness, constancy, with more than mortal strength. Let us try to understand what it is, and how it is to be performed.

Asceticism has entirely missed the scriptural meaning of "mortification." In its dogmas and practices, we have an apostle's authority for saying that there is only "a show of wisdom." The body is not "kept under," but lacerated and tormented

* Colossians iii. 5, 7, 8.

into debility. The appetites are looked upon as in themselves sinful, and fit only to be exterminated. The physical constitution is thus enervated and sickened. Yet its sinful tendencies are only beaten down, not eradicated. The whole process is a cardinal mistake. The body may be reduced; and yet the evil bias remain unchecked. A man may whip and fast himself into a walking skeleton; and yet the spirit within him may have its lusts unconquered, losing only the ability to gratify them. To place a fetter on a robber's hands will not cure him of covetousness, though it may disqualify him for actual theft. To seal up a swearer's mouth will not pluck profanity out of his heart, though it may for the time prevent him from taking God's name in vain. And so to lacerate the flesh, even if it be to the verge of suicide, merely incapacitates it for indulgence, and does not extirpate sinful desire.

It is said that an ancient philosopher, a pupil of the illustrious Plato, "would never mention who his father or his mother was, or where he was born, or anything of that description, because he always appeared to be ashamed that he had a body." These men regarded the body as a filthy garment, with which the soul, in its wanderings, becomes accidentally invested for a short time, which can never be rendered a congenial or suitable covering for the spirit, but which that spirit should only loathe, separate itself from, and escape out of as quickly as possible; and it is this heathen speculation that has poisoned so much of the nominal Christianity of many ages. But "the Holy Scriptures inform us that man's body, no less than his soul, is the work of God, and that he made both of them 'very good'; that both are fallen

and polluted by sin, both redeemed by the blood of Christ, both subjects of sanctification by the Holy Spirit; and that the body is co-heir, with the soul, of that immortal life which is God's promise to us in his Son. No contrast can be more striking than that between the language of contempt and even of hatred in which the heathen sages speak of the body, and the reverential and honourable terms used by the sacred writers on the same subject."

The strong hold which false notions respecting the body have taken of the human heart may be seen in the case of Madame GUYON. Even after she had received considerable enlightenment in divine truth, and could say, "I had now no sight but of Jesus alone," with a strange inconsistency, the fruit of her Romish education, she inflicted on herself a series of the most painful and repulsive austerities. Every day for some time she disciplined herself with scourges pointed with iron; she tore her flesh with brambles, thorns, and nettles; very often she kept wormwood in her mouth, and put coloquintida in her food. When she walked she put stones in her shoes. All that could allure the taste or please the senses was refused to them: all that created the greatest dislike or pain was given them. She aimed to annihilate the distinction between pleasant and unpleasant, sweet and bitter, and to train her senses to a state of perfect indifference to both. Her thirst for pain and suffering seemed unquenchable.

These mortifications were practised by Madame Guyon, not as expiatory but as disciplinary. She did not hope to atone for guilt thereby, but to conform her heart and habits to the standard which she had set before herself. But even in this she was mistaken,

as she afterwards discovered. One of the gravest charges against her at a later period of her life was, that she did not value self-imposed penance as she ought. "Is it," said Bossuet to her, "is it a mark, Madam, of Christian lowliness to disregard the principles and practices which have been sanctioned by the wisdom and piety of many ages? In your 'Short Method of Prayer' there are some expressions which seem to imply that the austerities and mortifications which are practised in the Catholic church are not necessary." "I admit," she replied, "that my views and practices differ in this particular from those of some other persons. I cannot say that I do now, with the views which I have of the power and applications of faith, attach that importance to austerities and practices of physical mortification which I once did. My view now is this: Physical sufferings and mortifications which tend to bring the appetites into subjection, and to restore us in that respect to harmony with God, are of great value: they are a part of God's discipline, which he has wisely instituted and rendered operative in the present life; but then they should not be self-sought or self-inflicted, but should be received and submitted to as they come in the course of God's providence. In other words, crosses are good: our rebellious nature needs them: not those, however, which are of merely human origin, but those which God himself makes and imposes."

The apostle Paul, whose guidance we follow implicitly, declares that self-inflicted bodily mortifications are not only inefficacious, having "only a show of wisdom," but that they also produce an effect directly the opposite to their professed design. Their avowed purpose is to lower and abase humanity; and

Paul gives them epithets all showing this object; while with sternness and force he adds, in effect, that their only result is to rouse up and inflate unregenerate humanity. When Diogenes lifted his foot on Plato's velvet cushion, and shouted, "Thus I trample on Plato's pride," the Athenian sage justly replied, "But with still greater pride." The apostle utters a similar sentiment: the carnal nature is all the while gratified, even though the body, wan and wasted, be reduced to the point of bare existence. There is as much pride in cells and cloisters as in courts and palaces, perhaps more; and oftentimes as gross sensuality. Bodily self-inflictions, so far from accomplishing their ostensible object, really produce the reverse: their humility is pride in its most sullen and offensive form; and, so far from subduing and sanctifying, they only gratify to satiety the coarse and selfish passions; nay, as history has shown, tend to nurse licentiousness in one age, and a ferocious fanaticism in another.*

The death which the words "mortify your members" enjoin as a duty, is a death to all sinful propensities—the apostle being his own interpreter. The lust that uses and debases the organs of the body as its instruments is to be extirpated. "The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life," in all their varied forms and fruits, are to be rooted out and abandoned. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."†

* See Dr. Eadie's Commentary on Colossians: chap. ii. 20—23.
† Romans vi. 12, 13.

In some well-known instances, Colonel GARDINER'S for example, this "death unto sin" in its grosser forms has been effected with a suddenness which nothing can explain but the power of divine grace. Living for many years in a perpetual round of sensualities, he used to say that Omnipotence itself could not reform him without giving him another body. But from the hour of his conversion "all desire and inclination" to the evils he had so long practised were as entirely removed as if he were an infant. With his old body he lived a new life, loathing those things which had been his heaven before, and not only practising virtue, but by his holiness and devoutness adorning the doctrine of his Saviour. This "death unto sin," even in its grosser forms, often involves however a protracted struggle and many failures. Instructive instances of this struggle in humble life will be found in the pages of "English Hearts and English Hands" —instances which illustrate very strikingly the difficulties of "holy living" in large classes of the community.

The conflicts of good men with inward sins, and with sins whose outward "manifestations of an un-Christ like spirit" are scarcely noticed amidst the glaring violations of Christian law which prevail in the world, are often the occasion of as much mental suffering as the conflicts of others with "the lusts of the flesh." At the commencement of his ministerial life we find Dr. PAYSON often "discouraged by the little which he accomplishes, and the selfish motives with which that little is defiled." He is assailed by "strong temptations, which drive him to his knees for assistance;" and by "frequent recurrence of the same

Edward Payson; born in New Hampshire, 1783; died 1827.

temptation, which costs him long and severe "struggles before he is favoured with complete victory." This is followed by "increased confidence in God, as able to supply all his need, and, at the same time, with a more humbling sense of his unfitness for the ministry."

And, even when he is in a "lively frame" during several successive days, he is still "astonished at his slow progress in religion." Again, "pride and unbelief begin to work, and render him miserable," and for defence against them he resorts "to prayer, pleading various arguments for the space of an hour, before he is able to repress pride and repining thoughts." Nor is this the extremity of his conflict: he has such "a dreadful view of his heart, that he could scarcely support the sight of himself;" while this, "instead of humbling, only distressed him; so that he is at last obliged to desist, without, as he can perceive, any answer at all." The next day he can cry, "Abba, Father," with all the confidence of filial love.

After years of experience and usefulness, Dr. Payson wrote these words:—"As you suspect, popularity costs me dear; and did it not afford me the means of being more extensively useful, I should heartily pray to be delivered from it, as the greatest of all curses. Since the novelty has worn off, it affords me no pleasure; and yet I am continually wishing for more, though it feeds nothing but pride. If we had no pride, I believe applause would give us no pleasure. But no one can conceive how dearly it is purchased; what unspeakably dreadful temptations, buffetings, and workings of depravity are necessary to counteract the pernicious effects of this poison. It is, indeed, the first and last prayer which I wish my friends to offer up for me, that I may be kept humble; and if your too great and

undeserved affection for me will exert itself in this way—that is, in praying for me—it may preserve your gourd from the blast and the worm."

The experience of other eminent servants of Christ has been of the same character. "A detestable vanity for the reputation of a 'good preacher' (as the world terms it) has already cost me many conflicts," said SAMUEL PEARCE. "Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that 'It is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him.' But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock."

The Rev. CHARLES SIMEON was conscious of his danger from the same source. Writing to a friend in 1817, with reference to malignant attempts which had been made to injure his character, he said, "If I were to attempt to assign a cause for these untoward circumstances having been permitted, I should think it was partly in mercy, to add ballast to my slender bark, and partly in judgment to counteract and punish an undue measure of complacency, which I may have felt in my growing popularity. I certainly have seen, for a long time back, the almost invariable kindness and respect with which I have been treated by all orders and degrees of men in this place; and it is possible that God may have seen me more gratified with it than I ought to be."

Such entries as the following are often found in

the diary of Dr. Chalmers :—" Sunday, Dec. 8, 1811. Let all vanity, O my God, be crucified within me. Let my sole aim be to win souls; and, though I cannot at all times command a clear and enraptured view of divine truth, let me fill up every interval with works which bespeak the Christian. Bring me closer and closer to Him to whom thou hast given all power, and committed all judgment. Fill me with his fulness; and may I have peace and joy with thee through Jesus Christ my Lord."—" Dec. 10. Let me be peculiarly on my guard against all selfisnness and love of display; and, O my God, let me not satisfy myself with choking up the streams which flow from my vitiated heart. Apply the remedy to the seat and centre of the disease. Renew this heart; sanctify it by the faith that is in Jesus, and form it to thyself in righteousness and all in holiness."—" Dec. 17. Let me give more earnestness and application to the secret discipline of the inner man; and, O God, assist me in Christ to regulate my thoughts, and to go on joyfully, without perplexity, harassment, or fatigue."

Sarah Martin, in the midst of her Christlike efforts for the salvation of the inmates of Yarmouth prison, refers to some occurrence in her prison experience in these words of self-reproach and penitence: " Thou, O Lord, seest the prayer of my heart respecting the circumstances of this day: oh! blot out my sins of temper, of unkindness, of ingratitude, of impatience. Oh! forgive, forgive, I beseech thee. The foe is powerful; my corrupt nature is on the side of the enemy. Oh that I had returned good for evil, and love and gratitude for good! Forbid, I pray thee, any evil to others from what I have said; for when I reproved the sinner, I did it not in love, but in the

feeling of human vexation and of human anger. I did not love the sinner, but felt great dislike, yea, aversion to him. Have pity on the lost and guilty one: teach him to pray, and whilst I try thine infinite forbearance as I do, give me the grace of patience and forbearance to others, I beseech thee, most gracious God, Father, Son, and Spirit."

JOHN BUNYAN, in the end of his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," says, "I find to this day seven abominations in my heart: (1.) Inclination to unbelief. (2.) Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Christ manifesteth. (3.) A leaning to the works of the law. (4.) Wanderings and coldness in prayer. (5.) To forget to watch for that I pray for. (6.) Apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet ready to abuse what I have. (7.) I can do none of those things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thrust in themselves: when I would do good, evil is present with me." "These things," he adds, "I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the wisdom of God doth order them for my good. (1.) They make me abhor myself. (2.) They keep me from trusting my heart. (3.) They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness. (4.) They show me the necessity of flying to Jesus. (5.) They press me to pray unto God. (6.) They show me the need I have to watch and be sober. (7.) And provoke me to pray unto God, through Christ, to help me, and carry me through this world."

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" is the anxious inquiry of every man who, like these worthies, and like Paul, has discovered the extent of sin in his heart. "So

bound and hampered by the power of sin, I cry for a mighty deliverer to rid me of the intolerable burden, this sinful and degenerate nature, which disturbs my peace, sullies the purity of my renewed mind, and aims at nothing short of my spiritual and eternal death." "I thank God,"—the apostle answered his own question, and with a divine guidance which makes the answer the only true one for others as well as for him,—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "He, who has begun to deliver me, will, in due time, complete the deliverance *through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" The answer is comprehensive. Deliverance from sin will be effected by the gospel and the grace of Jesus Christ—not by the law and by the strength of my own will.

"Sin shall not have dominion over you," he had said, a few sentences before, "because ye are not under the law, but under grace."* "Conscious," says Doddridge in his paraphrase of the passage, "of the obligations you lie under to Him who hath raised you to this new and glorious life, present all your members and powers to God as weapons and instruments of righteousness to fight his battles, and be for ever devoted to his service. Do it boldly and resolutely, and not as if you feared that your former master should recover his power and prove a severer tyrant, after you had thus attempted to revolt; for you may, on the contrary, be assured that sin shall not have any more dominion over you, as you are not under the law, a dispensation of bondage and terror, but under grace, under the merciful dispensation of the gospel, which affords such consolations, and inspires such hopes, as may animate the soul to a much more successful

*Romans vi. 14.

combat with sin than the law could do, and give a much nobler assurance of a complete victory over it." Instead of sinning as we please, "because under grace," the "grace" of the gospel is our only hope of deliverance from sin; it provides the only *motives* that are adequate to the occasion, and opens a channel for the communication of the only *power* that can render these motives effectual. The law, though a perfect rule of life to those who have a mind to obey it, does not contain, as we have seen in an earlier part of this volume, the means of subduing and winning the rebel heart to God. It is the opening of the door of mercy by the gospel, and the exhibition of the love of God to sinners in the opening of this door, that can do this. The law provides no medium through which the Holy Spirit may be given for the renewing and purifying of human character, but the gospel does. And thus "grace" secures that "sin shall not have dominion" over those who believe in the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In his daily warfare with sin, the Christian must make daily use of these principles. They are needful not only to the first breaking of the power of sin, but to the continuous warfare with its influences. We must look daily for pardon through the blood of Christ. We must cherish towards Christ daily that same grateful love which was awakened when first we received his mercy. We must daily ask and put our trust in that Holy Spirit, who is the source of all spiritual power and purity. Let any burden of guilt rest on our consciences, or let any spirit of self-confidence take possession of our hearts, and either will be fatal to success in our battles with sin. But if we habituate ourselves to apply to the Saviour, in the

spirit of children, for the pardon of every known sin and for the hourly supply of divine strength, we shall be more than conquerors. When "Christian's" conflict with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation was over—a conflict in which he received not a few wounds—"there came to him a hand," says John Bunyan, "with some of the leaves of the 'tree of life,' the which Christian took and applied to the wounds that he had received in the battle, and was healed immediately. He also sat down in that place to eat bread, and to drink of that bottle that was given him a little before: so being refreshed, he addressed himself to his journey with his sword drawn in his hand; for he said, 'I know not but some other enemy may be at hand.'"

John Newton has taught us the same lesson in a form which is not the less effective that it is homely. The spider and the toad engage in deadly conflict. Again and again is the toad wounded, but "by ready instinct taught," seeks the antidote to the spider's poison by cropping the leaf of the herb plantain. At length the spectator of the contest removed the healing plant, and when the wounded toad rushed as before to seek relief, and found it not, it swelled and died. "The toad's an emblem of my heart," says Mr. Newton, "and Satan acts the spider's part."

"Envenomed by his poison, I
Am often at the point to die;
But He who hung upon the tree,
From guilt and woe to set me free,
Is like the plantain leaf to me.
To him my wounded soul repairs:
He knows my pain, and hears my prayers:
From him I virtue draw by faith,
Which saves me from the jaws of death;
From him fresh life and strength I gain,
And Satan spends his rage in vain.

No secret arts, or open force,
Can rob me of this sure resource.
Though banished to some distant land,
My medicine would be still at hand:
Though foolish men its worth deny,
Experience gives them all the lie.
Christ's blood a sovereign balm is found
For every grief and every wound;
And sooner all the hills shall flee
And hide themselves beneath the sea,
The sun, exhausted of its light,
Become the source of endless night,
And ruin spread from pole to pole,
Than Jesus fail the tempted soul."

There are some principles which, as compared with these, may be called subordinate, but which are still of great importance in the warfare with sin. First of all is the importance of cultivating the positive virtues and graces of the Christian character as a preventive and counteractive to sin. And how this is to be done we have already seen. There are many diseases which are to be cured not by local applications or specific remedies, but by the general improvement of the health and the invigoration of the constitution. And the rule applies to the soul as well as to the body. The conscientious, devout, and earnest cultivation of the spirit of humble piety, and of its practical fruits, will *throw off* many spiritual ailments, and without it specific remedies will be in vain.

The Christian's character, and consequently his power to resist sin, is greatly strengthened by the exercise of self-denial; not such self-denial as has been practised by many, for its own sake, or for the sake of the painfulness which it involves, but such as our Lord has enjoined in the solemn words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save

his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."* There is no virtue in doing what is disagreeable, as we have seen Madame Guyon thought in her earlier religious life. "This is Buddhism, but it is not Christianity. Christianity says to us, Suffer, labour, endure up to martyrdom, when duty calls you; but do not fancy that there is anything noble in throwing yourself in martyrdom's way. 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" And the same principle applies to a thousand things which do not approach martyrdom. There is nothing Christian in denying yourself the temperate use of pleasant and nutritious food which Providence places on your own table, and then going out, as Loyola did, to beg a morsel of bread from door to door; but it is a Christian duty to avoid luxury and waste, that you may deal your bread to the hungry. There is nothing Christian in abandoning your comfortable hearth to stand barefoot and ill-clad amid the snow and storm of a winter's night; but if a neighbour's wants are to be relieved, or a neighbour's sorrows require sympathy, snow and storm should be encountered, and the comforts of your blazing fireside relinquished. There is nothing Christian in forsaking home and living among savages, that there you may have the perpetual companionship of pain and suffering; but if you forego the enjoyments of civilized society to teach savages the way of return to God, the pain and suffering of constant intercourse with them will be true Christian self-denial. There is nothing Christian in rushing into the arms of death for the mere sake of what is abhorrent to our sensitive nature; but if we "give our body to be burned," rather than deny our Lord or his truth,

*Luke ix. 23, 24.

we obey his will, and render to him a pleasing sacrifice.

Self-denial that is gratuitous and objectless is sheer folly. To be a Christian and acceptable to Christ, it must have a practical end, such an end as his word approves; and the exercise of such self-denial is very strengthening to the Christian character. Every instance in which a man denies himself an *unlawful* gratification, which has solicited his indulgence, prepares him for an easier conquest of sin when next the same temptation returns. And every instance in which a man denies himself that which is *lawful*, "not conferring with flesh and blood," for the sake of a higher good, whether his own or another's, strengthens the higher principles of his renewed nature, and assimilates him to Christ, who habitually pleased not himself, and even died for the redemption of mankind.

Apart from Christian principle and the exercise of the Christian graces, it is found that resolute effort and self-denial are morally strengthening. Sir Andrew Agnew spent his boyhood in the residence of his maternal grandfather, the premier baron of Ireland; and his imagination had long pictured his Scottish inheritance as a scene of beauty. But when, at the age of sixteen, on the death of his paternal grandfather, he went to take possession, he found it a wilderness; and "his spirit died within him." The old castle of Lochnaw looked grim and repulsive; the grounds around had long been neglected; plantations, undisturbed for years, formed a barricade through which it was difficult to penetrate; a once ornamental lake was now only a morass; the neighbourhood was remote and lonely, and roads had scarcely an existence. Should he remain and attempt to reclaim the

wilderness, or retire and live on its produce in some more favoured spot? The question was long and earnestly pondered; and his final decision was in favour of the nobler and more difficult alternative. The result, as it respects his property, is soon told. He lived to see his domain growing into a little earthly paradise. But who can tell the effect of that decision on the development or formation of his own character? With a nature of almost feminine softness, and nurtured in circumstances which did not counteract but confirm its weaker tendencies, had he chosen the easier course, the choice would have strengthened the spirit of self-indulgence, and weakened those latent energies which had yet given no sign of their existence. The task to which he gave himself, involving daily self-denial and effort, contributed much to the formation of that character which shone so brightly when hallowed by Christian principle, and whose firmness and decision were severely tested by the labours and conflicts of his later life.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."* "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."† "Within the last two years," wrote the Rev. Andrew Fuller, "I have experienced, perhaps, as much peace and calmness of mind as at any former period. I have been enabled to walk somewhat nearer to God than heretofore; and I find that there is nothing which affords such a preservative against sin. 'If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' This passage has been of great use to me ever since I preached from it, which was on June 3, 1792. The idea on

*Galatians v. 16. † Romans xiii. 14.

which I then principally insisted was, that sin is to be overcome, not so much by a direct or mere resistance to it, as by opposing other principles and considerations to it. This sentiment has been abundantly verified in my experience: so far as I have walked in the Spirit, so far has my life been holy and happy; and I have experienced a good degree of these blessings compared with former times, though but a very small degree compared with what I ought to aspire after."

"It is seldom," says Dr. Chalmers, "that any of our tastes are made to disappear by a mere process of natural extinction. But what cannot be thus destroyed may be dispossessed; and one taste may be made to give way to another, and to lose its power entirely as the reigning affection of the mind. It is thus that the boy ceases, at length, to be the slave of his appetite; but it is because a manlier taste has now brought it into subordination: and that the youth ceases to idolize pleasure; but it is because the idol of wealth has become the stronger, and gotten the ascendency: and that even the love of money ceases to have the mastery over the heart of many a thriving citizen; but it is because, drawn into the whirl of city politics, another affection has been wrought into his moral system, and he is now lorded over by the love of power. . . . . Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character, when bidden, as he is in the New Testament, to love not the world; no, nor any of the things that are in the world. But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience places within our reach as mighty an instrument of obedience. It brings for admittance to the very door of our heart an affection which, once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous

inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world, it places before the eye of the mind Him who made the world; and with this peculiarity, which is all its own, that in the gospel do we so behold God, as that we may love God. . . . . The object of the gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience, and to purify his heart; and it is of importance to observe, that what mars the one of these objects mars the other also. The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil."*

It is another aspect of the same principle we have in the proverb, "The house that is unoccupied, the devil finds a tenant for;" and in Dr. Watts's well-known words:—

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

The same lesson is taught in one of our Lord's parables: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."† "To me," says a commentator on this passage, "it seems probable that the Lord alluded to the great regeneration of the people which had taken place through the Babylonian captivity. During all their earlier history, the people might be

* Sermon on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."
† Matthew xii. 43—45.

said to be possessed by an unclean spirit—the spirit of idolatry: nothing seemed to have the power of teaching them the value of the true worship which they enjoyed, until at length the spirit was effectually exorcised by the captivity in Babylon. After the return, we hear of it no more; the love of idols was replaced by a detestation of idolatry, complete and cordial. Here, then, was the case of the empty house—the spirit expelled; but the misfortune was, that the house remained empty. No spirit purer and better took possession of it: it was a merely negative religious state; and the consequence was that a new entrance was afforded for the devil. He came in the shape of formalism and outward ceremonial religion, and made the condition of those who admitted him into their hearts seven times worse than before—more hopeless than if given up to idols." Whether this reference to the captivity was intended by our Lord, or not, it illustrates the truth, that the heart of man must not only be "swept and garnished," but well occupied, if it is to be preserved free from the intrusion of evil spirits.

In their warfare with sin, Christians have to watch especially against what are called *besetting sins*. The strength of a piece of mechanism is just as its strength at the *weakest* point. The Christian's stability will be as his strength in the weakest point of his character. "Satan sorteth every spirit with a proper bait," says an old divine. In one man the peculiar source of danger may be pride; in another, vanity; in another, worldliness; in another, a violent and ungovernable temper; in another, a corrupt imagination; in another, a heavy, leaden, insensible

heart; in another, some unholy and improper attachment. The sins in which we indulged before conversion, to which we are particularly exposed by our natural temperament or by our profession or situation in life, must be guarded against with double vigilance.

"Every man has his besetting sin," we have heard said with some complacence, and in a tone of apology, by men who tried to disarm their apprehensions and silence their fears by a consideration which should rather fill them with dismay. Their idea seems to have been that the existence of a besetting sin is a matter of course, on which God looks with indulgence. If other sins are avoided, the besetting sin will not be treated with much severity. Only let a man be, from constitution or from circumstances, inclined to a particular sin, and he may commit that sin with little fear. The easier our sins are to throw off, the more earnestly, on this principle, should we throw them off; but the more they cleave to us, and the greater the difficulty of resisting them, the more may we feel ourselves at ease respecting them.

Such views have only to be stated to expose the error or wickedness that lurks in them. A besetting sin is to be regarded with special apprehension and dread. Our walls of defence may be exposed to but little danger except at one point: and it is at that point our vigilance and strength should be concentrated. Our bodily constitution may be strong in every respect but one; if we neglect that one weakness, it may soon bring us to our grave. "You have seen a ship swinging with the tide, and seeming as if it would follow it, and yet it cannot; for down beneath the water it is anchored. So many a soul sways

towards heaven, but cannot ascend thither, because it is anchored to some secret sin."

The biography of the Rev. Charles Simeon discloses to us instructively some of his conflicts with besetting sin. "A thousand thanks to you," he wrote in 1788 to a friend who had warned him against vanity, "for many valuable observations in your last letter; especially that which I hope to remember—that ministers, when truly useful, and more perfectly instructed in the ways of God, are 'off their speed,' and not so full of their success. Alas, alas! how apt are young ministers (I speak feelingly) to be talking of that great letter I. It would be easier to erase that letter from all the books in the kingdom, than to hide it for one hour from the eyes of a vain person. Another observation, in a former letter of yours, has not escaped my remembrance; the three lessons which a minister has to learn—1. Humility—2. Humility—3. Humility. How long are we learning the true nature of Christianity!"

"Amongst other infirmities," says his biographer, "it may be observed that Mr. Simeon was much tried at times, by a certain irritability of temper, which was doubtless not a little aggravated by occasional attacks of the gout. No one, however, could be more sensible of the evil than he was himself; and never was any one more ready to confess and deplore his failings. Occasionally these outbreaks would almost provoke a smile, from the nature of the incidents out of which they arose." To a friend who had witnessed one of these outbreaks, and had admonished him in a gentle and loving letter, he wrote, "I most cordially thank you, my dear friend, for your kind and seasonable reproof. I feel it to be both just and necessary; and

will endeavour, with God's help, to make a suitable improvement of it. I trust your 'precious balm will not break my head;' but I hope it will soften the spirit of your much-indebted friend." And in a second letter he said: "You have no occasion to think of apologies; for I have day and night thanked God for you, and prayed for blessings on your head, and watched and prayed against my besetting sin, or rather against one out of a thousand of my besetting sins. I know and feel that I am extremely blamable on the side you referred to; but, in spite of all my wishes and endeavours, if I am not much upon my guard, I fall again and again into the same sins. I hope, my dearest brother, that when you find your soul nigh to God, you will remember one who so greatly needs all the help he can get."

"Resist the first advances,"* said an old Roman poet: "a cure is attempted too late," he added, "when, through long hesitation, the malady has waxed strong." The words have passed into a proverb, equally good in medicine and in morals. There is no one more interested in it than the Christian. "Repel the beginnings of evil," should be a first rule of his life—a rule which many fables illustrate, and many facts enforce. "The trees of the forest held a solemn parliament," says an old divine, Thomas Adams, "wherein they consulted of the numerous wrongs which the axe had done them: therefore they enacted that no tree should hereafter lend the axe wood for a handle, on pain of being cut down. The axe travels up and down the forest, begs wood of the cedar, oak, ash, elm, even to the poplar; not one would lend him a chip. At

* Obsta principiis.

last he desired so much as would serve him to cut down the briers and bushes, alleging that those shrubs did suck away the juice of the ground, hinder the growth and obscure the glory of the fair and goodly trees. Hereon they were content to afford him so much. When he had gotten his handle, he cut down the trees too. These be the subtle reaches of sin: give it but a little advantage on the fair promise to remove thy troubles, and it will cut down thy soul also. Therefore resist beginnings: trust it not in the least. Consider a sin (as indeed it is) a crucifying of Christ: wilt thou say, I may crucify Christ a little? I may scourge his flesh, wound his side, pierce his heart a little? What man loves the Lord Jesus who would either say it, or do it? Consider thy falling into sin a hurling of thyself down from some high pinnacle: wilt thou say, I may break my neck a little? Consider it a casting thyself into unquenchable fire: wilt thou say, I may burn my soul and body a little? As suffering we think the least misery too great, so sinning let us think the least iniquity too great."

Little sins are ruin whenever they are indulged. He who is false to present duty, be it great or small, "breaks a thread in the loom, and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten the cause." "Men, in their property, are afraid of conflagrations and lightning strokes; but if they were building a wharf in Panama, a million madrepores, so small, that only the microscope could detect them, would begin to bore the piles, down under the water. There would be neither noise nor foam; but in a little while, if a child did but touch the post, over it would fall as if a saw had cut it through. Now men think, with regard to their conduct, that, if they were to lift themselves up

gigantically and commit some crashing sin, they would never be able to hold up their heads; but they will harbour in their souls little sins, which are piercing and eating them away to inevitable ruin."

"The mischiefs which befall Christian character, and destroy its growth, are such as lie in the ordinary duties of life. Christians do not, usually, fall back into declension or disgraceful apostasy on a sudden, or by the overcoming power of great and strange temptations. They are stolen away rather by little and little, and almost insensibly to themselves. They commonly fall into some lightness of carriage; some irritation of temper in their family or business; some neglect of duty to children, apprentices, or friends: some artfulness; some fault of integrity in business. These are the beginnings of evil. At length they grow a little more remiss. They begin to slight their secret duties. The world and its fashions become more powerful, and they yield a little further; till at length they are utterly fallen from the spirit and standard of Christians.

Let no sin be accounted small. The world may speak of *white* sins, but all sins are black or crimson in the sight of God. And he that is consciously unjust in the least will soon be unjust in the much. The cloud which at first is no bigger than a man's hand will soon cover the heavens. The leprous spot, which is at first so small that it requires searching out to find it, will soon cover the whole person. Look at that young lady who is standing on the margin of a precipice which overhangs the Falls of Niagara. She is delighted with the wonders of the scene, and ambitious to pluck a little flower from a cliff where no human hand has before ventured, as a memorial of

the cataract and of her own daring. She leans over the verge and catches a glimpse of the surging waters far down the battlements of rocks, while fear for a moment darkens her excited mind. But there hangs the lovely blossom on which her heart is fixed; and she leans, in a delirium of intense desire and anticipation, over the brink. Her arm is stretched out to grasp the beautiful form which charms her fancy; the turf yields to the pressure of her light feet, and with a shriek she descends, like a falling star, to the rocky shore, and is borne away gasping in death.

Many good men in their warfare with sin have frequently betaken themselves to fasting with prayer. During a period of affliction, the following entry occurs in the diary of the Rev. Charles Simeon :—"Wednesday, Feb. 25, 1807. Fast day.—I wished much to keep this day holy to the Lord. In every point of view—as laid aside from work, and, suspended as it were from my office, it became me to humble myself; and I was entirely at liberty to detach my mind from everything that was foreign to that duty. I have always judged it inexpedient for a minister to fast, because he is thereby in danger of unfitting himself for his work; but my neglect of it on other occasions laid a tenfold obligation on me to consecrate this day to God in fasting as well as prayer. In my morning devotions I was tolerably comfortable, but not able to humble myself as I could wish. In the family prayer my spirit was much enlarged, and a blessing seemed to descend on all of us. At the chapel I could not get my soul engaged in the prayers as I ought."

Such entries as the following occur frequently in the diary of Dr. Payson :—"June 10, 1807.—The

family being mostly absent to-day, I resolved to spend it in fasting and prayer, for a supply of ministerial gifts and Christian graces; especially that I might be made an able, faithful, and successful minister of the New Testament. Was assisted, both last night and this morning, in seeking the divine presence and blessing. God graciously heard and answered me. I was favoured with great and unusual fervency and perseverance in prayer; was enabled to confess and mourn over my sins, and to mourn because I could not mourn more; and was assisted in renewing covenant with God, and in giving myself up to be his for ever." "June 25th.—Thinking it would be more convenient to keep my weekly fast on this day, sought the divine presence and blessing. Felt some warm affections towards my Saviour at first, but afterwards could neither realize my wants, nor pray to have them removed. Continued in this frame till towards night, and was then favoured with a deep sense of my utter vileness. Was also enabled to plead, even with agony of soul, to be freed from the power of selfish nature. Could not think of being any longer subject to it."

Such services as these are in harmony, we think, with the teaching of Christ and with the practices of his early followers. Our Lord condemned not fasting, but the motive which actuated the Pharisees, and the ostentation of religiousness which that motive produced. He intimated, at the same time, the approach of days when his disciples should have occasion to fast.* And those days came, but they have not yet passed away. When the Jews were going up to battle with their enemies, they fasted and prayed; and when the first soldiers of the cross were going

* Matthew ix. 14—17.

forth to their spiritual warfare, they fasted and prayed likewise.* In both cases the fasting was the symbol of deep humility, self-renunciation, and dependence on God.

The fasts of Judaism have passed away, as well as its feasts. But we may learn much from a careful examination of the circumstances, and the spirit in which they were observed. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find a word to countenance the idea that there is any virtue in self-inflicted suffering. The spirit of asceticism had no place in Old Testament fasts. Nor do we find anywhere a word to countenance the idea that fasting has of itself any purifying power. But fasting is a natural symbol of sorrow, and was practised as such whether the sorrow was that of repentance, or of perplexity, or of self-renunciation. When saints of old were overwhelmed with grief of any kind, they expressed their feelings by fasting and other signs. They resorted to fasting when they were in difficulty and were perplexed to know what they ought to do, and would express their distress and their renunciation of their own wisdom and power; when they were awakened to a consciousness of sin, and would express their humiliation and contrition. And there is an obvious analogy between the sign and the thing signified. Feasting is not a more natural sign of joy than fasting is of sorrow.

Some have erred in the extent to which they have carried the practice. This seems to have been the case with Dr. Payson. When he read the strong language of Paul, "Mortify your members that are upon the earth," and contemplated his example,

* Acts xiii. 3; xiv. 23

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," he desired above all things to be such another champion of the cross; and his susceptible and ardent nature seems to have impelled him, especially in youth, to courses that were injurious to his health. His physical conformation was delicate and sensitive, and his sufferings from this source were aggravated by imprudent abstinence from food and protracted mental efforts. If "he who ruleth well his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," the rigid discipline and government to which Dr. Payson subjected the passions of the mind and the appetites of the body may be taken as proof of his real greatness. But he multiplied his seasons of fasting to a degree which the human system could not long have sustained. This error he saw and lamented when it was too late. Of the propriety of fasting, however, he never entertained any doubt, and to the period of his last illness he practised a weekly fast. He was wont likewise to recommend partial fasting to his friends and flock. He would have them, when fasting on their own private account, not to "appear unto men to fast," but to come to the table which was spread for their families, with a cheerful countenance, and partake sparingly of its provisions.

Bodily indulgence fosters and stimulates sensual passions, and habitual moderation is essential to their due restraint. But fasting, even if frequent, has no direct power to subdue or extinguish sensual or other evil tendencies. And if the spiritual benefit which results from it is the fruit *directly* of the spiritual duties with which it is associated, it may be laid down as a rule, that literal fasting, to an extent which will incapacitate for these duties, must be spiritually

injurious rather than beneficial. The state of mind being everything, fasting, being only a symbol of that state, and an indirect means of promoting it, can be practised legitimately and spiritually only so far as it leaves the physical and mental power to engage in these duties unimpaired. On the general subject no rule can safely be laid down. It is certain that the most eminent saints of ancient and later times have devoted frequent seasons to fasting and prayer; and the practice may therefore be ranked among tried and approved means of growth in grace.

Those who are strangers to the Christian warfare may have their impression of the gloominess of religion confirmed by these views; but they cannot deny the force of the Saviour's words — "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."* A very pleasant thing it is to sail with the stream, to move forward gently on the bosom of the tide and with a favouring gale. There is a feeling of luxury in it. It is the symbol of majesty and peace, and one would be slow to disturb the joyous consciousness of progress and safety which is felt in such circumstances. But, after all, if there be a sunken rock underneath the waters over which one's friends are thus gliding so smoothly and hopefully, it would be the greatest cruelty to conceal the fact, even if the first-fruit of the announcement be a storm of inward agitation. Now, sin is that sunken rock in the sea of our Christian voyage; and,

* Matthew v. 30.

if we make no account of its existence, our voyage will be "with much damage and loss of life."

"Weep not for broad lands lost;
Weep not for fair hopes cross'd
Weep not when limbs wax old;
Weep not when friends grow cold;
Weep not that death must part
Thine and the best-loved heart;
Yet weep, weep all thou can—
Weep, weep because thou art
A sin-defiled man."

Nor is the gloom of this conflict with sin all that it seems. In the private journals of good men (we make general a remark which the biographer of the Rev. George Wagner makes respecting that holy man), the reader sees little of the happiness, little of the cheerful self-possession, the activity, and the lightness of a purified heart, with which the faithful servant of Christ discharges his daily duties, and mixes beneficently with his fellow-men. The picture is darkened by the painful struggles, the striving after attainments ever rising out of reach, the unreserved self-condemnation, the piteous self-abhorrence, which mark the dealings of the soul with its God in the midst of temptation and spiritual discipline; and which often deepen in intensity of expression as the heart is purified more and more from "the corruptions that are in the world through lust."

"So deep are my views of my corruption," said the Rev. Charles Simeon, "that I scarcely ever join in the confession of our church without perceiving, almost as with my bodily organs, my soul as a dead putrefied carcass;* and I join in that acknowledgment, 'There is no health in us,' in a way that none but God himself can conceive. No language that I could use could at

* Isaiah i. 6.

all express the goings forth of my soul with those words or the privilege I feel in being permitted to address the God of heaven and earth in these words, 'Almighty and most merciful Father.' Hence, then, my sighs and groans when in secret."

But these "sighs and groans" were not wrung from a miserable and slavish spirit. "It is now a little above forty years since I began to seek after God; and within about three months of that time, after much humiliation and prayer, I found peace through that Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. From that time to the present hour, I have never for a moment lost my hope and confidence in my adorable Saviour. For though, alas! I have had deep and abundant cause for humiliation, I have never ceased to wash in that fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness, or to cast myself upon the tender mercy of my reconciled God.

"With this sweet hope of ultimate acceptance with God, I have always enjoyed much cheerfulness before man; but I have, at the same time, laboured incessantly to cultivate the deepest humiliation before God. . . . There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold: the one is my own vileness; and the other is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and I have always thought that they should be viewed together, just as Aaron confessed all the sins of all Israel whilst he put them on the head of the scape-goat. The disease did not keep him from applying to the remedy, nor did the remedy keep him from feeling the disease. By this I seek to be, not only *humbled and thankful*, but *humbled in thankfulness*, before my God and Saviour continually."

Nor did this union of apparently opposite sentiments appear to Mr. Simeon either inconsistent or undesirable. "I have, and continually have had, such a sense of my sinfulness, as would sink me into utter despair, if I had not an assured view of the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to save me to the uttermost. And, at the same time, I have such a sense of my acceptance through Christ, as would overset my little bark if I had not ballast at the bottom sufficient to sink a vessel of no ordinary size. This experience has been now so unintermitted for forty years, that a thought of only some defect, or of something which might have been done better, often draws from me as deep a sigh as if I had committed the most enormous crime. I am far from conceiving it to be on the whole an undesirable experience; for by means of it my joys are tempered with contrition, and my confidence with fear and shame. I consider the religion of the day as materially defective in this point; and the preaching of pious ministers defective also. I do not see, so much as I could wish, a holy, reverential awe of God. The confidence that is generally professed does not sufficiently, in my opinion, savour of a creature-like spirit or of a sinner-like spirit. If ninety-nine out of a hundred, of even good men, were now informed for the first time that Isaiah in a vision saw the seraphim before the throne, and that each of the seraphs had six wings, and then were asked, 'How do you think that they employ their wings?' I think their answer would be, 'How! why they fly with them with all their might; and if they had six hundred wings they would do the same, exerting all their powers in the service of their God;' they would never dream of their employing two to veil

their faces, as unworthy to behold their God; and two to veil their feet, as unworthy to serve him; and devoting only the remaining two to what might be deemed their more appropriate use. But I doubt much whether the seraphs do not judge quite as well as they, and serve their God in quite as acceptable a manner as they would, if their energies were less blended with modesty and conscious unworthiness. But whatever opinions the generality of Christians might form, I confess that this is the religion which I love. I would have conscious unworthiness to pervade every act and habit of my soul; and whether the woof be more or less brilliant, I would have humility to be the warp."

It has been well said that religion, according to the man of the world, is a battle and not a hymn; according to the monk, a hymn and not a battle; but according to the practical Christian, a battle and a hymn together.

"Not on my arm, but on my brow,
His sacred sign I'll wear,
That every one I meet may know
Whose name and arms I bear
I go not forth, like men of old,
Cities and lands to win;
But oh! I wage a deadlier strife
Against the hosts of sin.
Strong in my God, and in his might,
The Spirit's sword I wield;
And in his name abide the fight,
On my own battle-field."

CHAPTER II.

CONFLICT WITH DESPONDENCY AND DOUBT.

CONTENTS.—Ebb and flow of feeling—Brainerd, Payson, Simeon—How account for such changes—Emotion not a test of spiritual condition—Melancholy temperament—Payson—The relations of mind and body—Cowper—Extract from Douglas of Cavers—Simeon—Distinct causes of despondency—Consciousness of sin—Ignorance, misapprehension, or forgetfulness of truth—Hezekiah—Christian and Hopeful in the castle of Giant Despair—The neglect of duty—Andrew Fuller and his church—Personal afflictions—Job—Disorders and irregularities of the world—Positive evidences of the Divine character—Shall we add the sovereign hiding of God's countenance?—Statements by Dr. Wardlaw—Doubt—Robert Hall—James Harington Evans, Robert Alfred Vaughan, Bunyan, Payson, Halliburton—True explanation—Resting places provided by the Bible—A young Brahmin—Extract from Caird—James A. Thomson.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."—PSALM xlii. 11.

"Did you ever sit in a half-cleared forest, and, looking up, see the light coming, streaming down in uncounted shades of brown and gold, and these all the while changing and running into each other with the rustling leaves and cloud-crossed sun? How useless to attempt to chronicle this play and interplay of light and dark! yet this would be simple and easy, compared with the effort to note the number and variety of our thoughts and feelings for a single hour."—H. WARD BEECHER.

"Many have been the doubts and fears, deep and varied the dejection and despondency of professed believers in Christ—even of not a few whose characters have afforded 'lucid proof' of their being most sincere in the profession. To trace these to their true sources is a matter of the highest importance and interest. But the anatomy of the deceitful heart is exceedingly intricate. It presents a variety so endless, of irregularities and anomalies in its structure, as to render its dissection and demonstration a very delicate and difficult task. Almost every case has its own peculiarities. There are, however, at the same time, *some* general principles, to which a considerable number, at least, of the varieties may be fairly reduced."—DR. WARDLAW.

CONFLICT WITH DESPONDENCY AND DOUBT.

THE diaries of many good men are, for the most part, a record of feelings as variable as the winds or the clouds. Night by night they have striven to give permanence, by their pens, to "the play and interplay of light and dark" which have passed over them during the day; and if the effort has not always been salutary to themselves, the result is instructive to others.

The experience of the holy Brainerd is one in point. The ebb and flow of feeling, like the tide on the same beach, day by day, which characterized his earthly existence, will be seen in the following passages of his diary:—"My life is a constant mixture of consolations and conflicts, and will be so till I arrive at the world of spirits." So he writes in an early page of his diary; and the record is both true and prophetic: "August 12, 1742.—I was exercised with sore inward trials; I had no power to pray, but seemed shut out from God. I saw so much of my own vileness, that I appeared worse to myself than any devil. I wondered that God would let me live, and wondered that people did not stone me, much more that they would ever hear me preach. It seemed as though I could never preach any more; yet about nine o'clock the people came over, and I was obliged to preach. And, blessed be

God, he gave me his presence and his Spirit in preaching, so that I was much assisted, and spake with power from Job xiv. 14: 'If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.' Some Indians cried out in great distress, and all appeared greatly concerned." "August 13.—Felt much comfort and devotedness to God today. At night, it was refreshing to get alone with God, and pour out my soul before him. Oh! who can conceive the sweetness of communion with the blessed God, but those who have experience of it? Glory be to God for ever, that I may taste heaven below." Such were his consolations and conflicts on two succeeding days. "Saturday, March 10, 1744.—My soul was sweetly resigned to God's disposal of me in every respect. I confided in God that he would never leave me, though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I thought that I then enjoyed such a heaven as far exceeded the most sublime conceptions of my unregenerate soul, and even unspeakably beyond what I myself could conceive at another time. . . . Towards night, I was very sorrowful, and seemed to myself the worst creature living. I could not pray, nor meditate, nor think of holding up my face before the world. Was a little relieved in prayer in the evening, but afterwards much perplexed, so that I could not sleep quietly." Such was his triumph and his abasement on the same day.

The experience of Dr. Payson was of the same order. "July 5, 1807.—Felt like a pure flame of love towards God and man. Self seemed to be almost swallowed up. Felt willing to go anywhere, or be anything, by which God could be glorified, and sinners

saved." "July 7.—Was harassed with wandering, gloomy, and distressing imaginations. Could not fix upon a text, and was much perplexed what to do. Was overwhelmed with melancholy." Extracts might be multiplied, exhibiting him as "sinking in deep waters, where the floods overflow him," and then again, "surprised with a sudden visit from his blessed Lord, full of sweetness to his soul;" his mind at one time so clogged in its operations by his burdens, that he "tries in vain to write;" at another so buoyant, that, "though almost confined to his bed, he is enabled to write a whole sermon in a day. This contrast is nowhere more strikingly marked than by the following entry, after suffering from "melancholy, which overwhelmed him like a thousand mountains, so that his soul was crushed under it:" "August 15.—Rose in a sweet, tranquil, thankful frame, blessing God for the storm of yesterday, and the calm to day. Oh, how great is his wisdom, how great his goodness! Had faith and freedom in prayer. Yesterday I thought God himself could hardly carry me through. But to-day—oh, how changed!"

A friend called on the Rev. Charles Simeon on one occasion, and found him so absorbed in the contemplation of the Son of God, and so overpowered with a display of his mercy to his soul, that, full of the animating theme, he was incapable of pronouncing a single word. At length, after an interval, with accents big, he exclaimed, "Glory! glory! glory!" "The relation of this affected me much," wrote Mr. Thomason, then a student, afterwards missionary to India; "and I asked myself, why I was so much a stranger to it? Why such coldness in *my* soul? If I love, why am

I thus? You see a pattern of zeal and fervency in that man of God, but what do *you* pretend to? You have neither part nor lot in the matter. Such were my reasonings: these led soon to discouragement, and the enemy suggested, 'You are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;' for certainly I thought that profession of religion is vain which is not built on the present possession of its joys. Sunday evening came, when we were to attend his lecture; I went with a heavy heart. 'If Mr. Simeon,' I said to myself, 'who is so full of religious joy, and so flourishing in his soul, knew me and my barrenness, he would not suffer me to enter into his presence.' Such was my feeling, when on coming to him I found this child of God in tenfold more misery than myself: he could scarcely discourse now from a deep humiliation and contrition: humbled before God, he could only cry out, 'My leanness! my leanness!' and, striking on his breast, utter the publican's prayer. This was the reverse of the scene. I now perceived that God dispenses his favours when and how he pleases; that he suits his dispensations to our several states and wants; and that the safest method we can take is to be 'sober and vigilant'—'to watch unto prayer,' that discouragement should not arise from occasional difficulties, but that we should consider the religious life subject to those vicissitudes which we observe in the natural. As in the one, summer and winter alternately refresh and destroy, yet are both equally necessary; so in the other, joys and sorrows are equally the portion of the good, but they are very necessary; and after all, the word of God declares, 'The righteous hath hope in his death.'"

How shall we account for such changes of feeling,

often sudden and extreme? and what importance shall we attach to them? are questions of some difficulty. Some indeed would make short work of them by denouncing them as visionary and enthusiastic—terms under the vague odium of which they would banish all feeling from the domain of religion. Of these some have no higher idea of religion than as a formal or ritual service, whose requirements are sufficiently complied with when certain acts are performed, and certain prayers are offered; and others regard it as a system worthy of the credence of the intellect, but which may be held apart from the affections of the heart. In the eyes of these persons nothing can be more allowable or natural than that a man should weep over the graves of his children; but for a man to weep over his sins—this is a weakness or something worse. The acquisition of wealth is a very lawful occasion of joy; but to rejoice in the heirship of a heavenly inheritance is a delusion. "*We* have not so learned Christ." In *his* personal experience we can trace extremes both of joy and of sorrow—and these invariably on spiritual grounds. In his word we have abundant sanction for sentiments of the deepest humiliation and of the loftiest joy. The publican—Christ's own type of a true penitent—could not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

That conscious sin is a sufficient reason for the profoundest sorrow, and that the possession of God's salvation is sufficient reason for the most exalted joy, admit of no rational or Scriptural doubt. But still the question returns, whether those ebbs and flows of

feeling of which we have given examples are to be regarded as a true index to the spiritual prosperity of the soul—to the strength of sin on the one hand, or of faith and holiness on the other. And we think that they are not. Simeon is so full of joy that he cannot speak for a time, and at last exclaims, "Glory! glory! glory!" A few days after he is in the deepest humiliation, and can only cry out, "My leanness! my leanness!" and utter the publican's prayer. How shall we account for the change? Has the strength of holy principle within him become enfeebled? If tested by any practical demand to suffer for Christ, would he be less ready to bear his cross? These questions may be answered with confidence. The change of feeling does not necessarily indicate any decline of principle. The loss of spiritual joy, *so far as joy is emotional*, and the occurrence of mental depression, may be occasioned by criminal causes; but *they may not*.

In the case of Payson, for example, his biographer tells us that in all his revolutions of feeling, varied exercises, and changing frames, there is discoverable an unvarying simplicity of purpose. "The destruction of sin, and the extension of the empire of holiness in himself and others are the objects constantly before him. His eye was single, and directed to the glory of God; and he longed for the salvation of men as the work in which the divine glory eminently appears." At one stage of his religious progress, Dr. Payson seems to have been so anxious for happy frames, that, without being conscious of it at the time, the obtaining of such frames was perhaps the immediate end of his offices of devotion; and according to their state he graduated his hope. As those were joyful or gloomy,

this was elevated or depressed. "This error," says his biographer, "and the sore chastisement which he suffered in consequence, he, in his last days, held forth as a warning to a near relative, whom he supposed to be in danger of a similar mistake." "I wish to get away from frames and feelings," he wrote to a friend on one occasion, "and live continually on the precious truth—'Christ has undertaken for me.' He is able, he is faithful; he will keep what he has undertaken to keep; he will do all he has undertaken to do." And to his daughter he said, not many months before his death, "There is nothing in which young converts are more prone to err, than in laying too much stress upon their feelings. If they have a comfortable half-hour in the morning, it atones for a multitude of sins in the course of the day. Christ says, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' It would be well for us to pay more attention to our conduct, and prove the depth of our feeling by our obedience."

We do not regard emotion as a test of a man's spiritual condition, for these among other reasons: (1) Emotion is not principle. (2) Emotion is determined to a large extent by constitutional temperament. And (3) emotion is often dependent on physical and external causes.

Emotion, we have said, is not principle. Love, as an emotion or passion, may be very fervent, and tumultuously violent, while as a principle of action it is weak and inoperative. Or, on the contrary, as an emotion it may be asleep, or only occasionally awake, while as a principle it is uniformly strong and practical. In the bosom of a father, for example, the

emotion of love to his children may be consciously or vividly awakened only by circumstances of more or less frequent occurrence, while the principle of love is habitual and deep-seated, flowing with all the strength and continuance of a mighty stream, and constraining him to a life of happy and ungrudging toil for their benefit. A child's love to his father is proved not by outbursts of feeling, but by uniform and hearty obedience; and a father's love to his children is proved by the practical well-doing which it prompts and inspires. In like manner, the true test of the Christian's love to his Saviour is not to be found in exultant feeling, but in simple, earnest, conscientious obedience to his will. "Ye are my friends," said Christ, "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

The dependence of a man's emotions on his constitutional temperament is well-known. That which produces no appreciable or visible effect on one man is sufficient to raise another into the heights of ecstasy, or sink him into the depths of despair. Passing through the same scenes, and with substantially the same views of life and of religion, one man goes forward with a calm intentness on the performance of duty, and with only a slight ripple on the waters of emotion; while another is like a ship on a stormy sea, ascending and descending on the surface of every billow. There may be in both cases equal purity of motive, equal conscientiousness, equal devotedness to the Saviour—whilst the emotional difference is the result of purely constitutional causes.

As a further reason for not regarding the emotions as a test of spiritual declension or of spiritual progress,

we have said that emotion is to a large extent dependent on physical and external causes. And this is but a widening of the observation, that emotion is determined to a large extent by constitutional temperament.

The relations of mind and body, and their mutual influences, are involved in much mystery. There are some bodily disorders which do not affect the mind injuriously. The mental power is often unimpaired and vigorous in the very hour of death. "My soul," said Dr. Payson himself on his death-bed, "instead of growing weaker and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body to join those around the throne."

But all bodily disorders are not equally harmless in their influence on the mind. The influence of nervous ailments on religious experience is very disastrous; and for the feelings produced by them we are not accountable, except so far as we are accountable for inducing that state of physical organization from which they result. "They are the offspring of a diseased mind, and cannot be shaken off whilst the physical cause remains. Every physical state of the nervous system has a correspondent state of mental emotion; and to remove the latter, the former must be changed. No mental diseases are so little understood as those originating in a physical cause; none excite so little sympathy, none are more real, and none give rise to more exquisite suffering. The unhappy victim passes long and wretched hours in the miserable world presented through the medium of a diseased mind, till death sweeps him and his sorrows to the land of forgetfulness; yet, while the physical cause continues its influence, a man might as well attempt to heap

Pelion on Ossa, as to remove from his burdened mind the pressure of distempered imaginations. Let those testify, upon whom dyspepsy has laid her leaden hand, quenching the fire of feeling and imagination, checking the flow of intellect, and haunting the mind with spectral apparitions of unreal evil."

William Cowper; born Nov. 26, 1731; died April 25, 1800.

The case of the pious, but afflicted COWPER will at once occur to the reader as an extreme instance of the mental misery that is often produced by physical causes. The poet had glided through life till he was one-and thirty years old, without God and without Christ. He was subject, however, even at this period, to a morbid depression, which it required only circumstances to ripen into madness. These occurred in connection with his appointment to a public office, and threw him into a nervous fever, which ended in repeated attempts to commit suicide. That gospel, which the world blamed as the cause of his insanity, found him already insane, and was a principal means of his restoration to mental soundness. In prose and in poetry he has left his own testimony to this fact. During the eight months of his seclusion in a private asylum at St. Albans, his soul was filled with convictions of sin, which induced despair. But his burden was removed by these words, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." "I saw," he says, "the sufficiency of the atonement Christ had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fulness and completeness of his justification. In a moment, I believed and received the gospel. Whatever my friend Madan had said to me so long before

revived with all its clearness, with demonstration of the Spirit and with power." "It was such a change," says Dr. Cheever, "so bright, so sudden, so complete, so joyful, that at first his kind, Christian, and watchful physician, Dr. Cotton, was alarmed lest it might terminate in frenzy; but he soon became convinced of the sacred soundness and permanent blissfulness of the cure. Every morning of the year he visited his interesting and beloved patient; and ever, in secret communion, the gospel was the delightful theme of their conversation. What a history of passing hours within the apartments of an insane hospital! Oh, if this were the theme of communion, and this the instrumentality of healing oftener employed, how many distressed, diseased, and wandering spirits might have been restored, that, neglected still, have wandered on till the wreck of reason has become confirmed and hopeless! The voice of Christ is the voice of true science to every lunatic, 'Bring him hither to me.'"

In the third book of "The Task," Cowper's touching "account of himself" is as follows:—

> "I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
> Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by One who had himself
> Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
> And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.
> Since then, with few associates, in remote
> And silent woods, I wander, far from those
> My former partners of the peopled scene:
> With few associates, and not wishing more.
> Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
> With other views of men and manners now
> Than once, and others of a life to come."

Those "other views" which he now cherished were

far from gloomy or morbid. Writing to a friend, years after the deliverance of which they were the means, he said: "Marshall ['On Sanctification'] is an old acquaintance of mine. I have both read him and heard him read with pleasure and edification. The doctrines he maintains are, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, the very life of my soul, and the soul of all my happiness. That Jesus is a *present* Saviour from the guilt of sin by his most precious blood, and from the power of it by his Spirit; that, corrupt and wretched in ourselves, in him, and in *him only*, we are complete; that, being united to Jesus by a lively faith, we have a solid and eternal interest in his obedience and sufferings, to justify us before the face of our heavenly Father; and that all this inestimable treasure, the earnest of which is in grace, and its consummation in glory, is given, freely *given*, to us of God; in short, he hath opened the kingdom of heaven *to all believers:* these are the truths which, by the grace of God, shall ever be dearer to me than life itself—shall ever be placed next my heart, as the throne whereon the Saviour himself shall sit, to sway all its motions, and reduce that world of iniquity and rebellion to a state of filial and affectionate obedience to the will of the Most Holy."

And dearer than life itself, these truths ever were to the heart of Cowper, although, through the power of an insane delusion, he afterwards judged himself to have no right or title to appropriate them to himself. "More mighty than the word of God, a supposed new revelation sprang up in his mind that he was to be an exception to that which admitted of no exception—the free and full proclamation of mercy through the gospel to sinners." He was often conscious of the true

cause of his dejection; but that consciousness imparted to him but little comfort. Of another instance of spiritual distress he wrote to Mr. Newton thus: "I have no doubt that it is distemper; but distresses of mind that are occasioned by distemper are the most difficult of all to deal with. They refuse all consolation: they will hear no reason. God only, by his own immediate impressions can remove them; as, after an experience of thirteen years' misery, I can abundantly testify." And yet, in the midst of that misery (in 1787), he could look back past those thirteen years to a period of light and happiness, in reference to which he would sometimes say that he could not be so duped, even by the arch-enemy himself, as to be made to question the divine nature of the peace and comfort which he had then enjoyed.

In seasons of gloom we find him writing letters of consolation to afflicted friends, in which there are references to an anticipated happy meeting in a better world; which would indicate that, amid all his personal despair, he was still the "prisoner of hope" himself, and kept in the bottom of his heart something of the encouragement he gave to others. Thus to Dr. Bagot, on occasion of a fresh and common sorrow, he said, in 1793, "Both you and I have this comfort when deprived of those we love; at our time of life we have every reason to believe that the deprivation cannot be long. Our sun is setting, too, and when the hour of rest arrives, we shall rejoin your brother, and many whom we have tenderly loved, our forerunners into a better country."

All reasoning is in vain, in cases of this order. "We have had experience of this," says Mr. Douglas of Cavers, "in the case of an aged Christian, who had

most full views of the gospel, but who yet suffered the impressions of his own mind—contrary to his own convictions—contrary to his own writings—to prevail against acknowledged truth; and though conversation and reasoning might for a moment dissipate the darkness, yet the clouds would still return after rain. This mental and perhaps incurable malady—which suffers a belief in the gospel to be accompanied by a denial of its applicability to the individual himself—presents, where it is altogether involuntary, a sublime and prolonged martyrdom; where the morbid mind still cleaves to the Saviour without a hope of participating in so great and so free a salvation."

We have spoken of Cowper's as an extreme case; but there are many substantially like it; and the principle which it involves of the dependence of emotion on physical and external causes is illustrated by every day's experience. When bright sunshine and a bracing atmosphere exhilarate our spirits, or when a thick and heavy atmosphere and gloomy sunless weather depress our spirits, we are personal witnesses to its truth. Man is fearfully and wonderfully made; and the soul within vibrates sensitively to the pulsations of the body in which it is enshrined, sometimes very gently and pleasantly, but sometimes violently and painfully—a fact which renders it impossible that we should accept the rising and falling of our emotions as a test of the rising and falling of our spiritual state before God.

It is still true that our emotions do often spring directly and naturally from our spiritual state. "Sometimes," said Mr. Simeon in his diary during a journey in 1807, "I have been as dull and stupid as ever; but

frequently, and in an unusual degree, my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. Doubtless, the elevation of joy has arisen in part from a flow of animal spirits; but I hope and trust that there has been something more than nature in it. My brother E. is a little disposed to undervalue the exercise of the affections, from an idea that they are stirred up by human efforts, and are likely to give us a mistaken apprehension of our state. Hence he labours rather to suppress than to excite the fervour of his affections; but if we can 'rejoice even with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' I think it desirable to do so, provided we preserve a becoming jealousy respecting the abuse of our affections [emotions or feelings], in a way of enthusiasm or of pride."

Mr. Simeon was right. It *is* desirable to rejoice always, provided we exercise a "becoming jealousy," lest we make our emotions the test of our spiritual condition, or pervert them into the food of pride. The gospel brings peace and joy to the soul, and these in various degrees, and according to the constitutional susceptibilities of the believer, are the habitual state of the Christian's heart, except as marred by disease, or unbelief, or sin, or error, or some latent and undiscoverable cause. And we now proceed to consider some causes of despondency which are distinct and discoverable.

The first cause of spiritual despondency with which we ought to deal is the consciousness of sin—of known and specific sins. In this there can be no deliverance from despondency without the abandonment of the sin which produces it. All attempts to say "peace" to the soul, while the soul cherishes its secret lust, will

be futile. What Achan was to the camp of Israel, that sin is to the Christian heart. By "a law of the God of Israel," it is sorrow and trouble. Holy peace and satisfaction are to be attained only by casting it out.

A gentleman, who attended the preaching of Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Adam Clarke for some time, was deeply convinced of sin. He became diligent in his attendance on the public ministry, deplored his sins, and with strong crying and tears sought pardon of God for his transgressions through the blood of Jesus Christ. He sought, but found not; he mourned, but was not comforted. Shortly afterwards he was confined to his chamber by sickness, and sent for Mr. Clarke to pray with him and for him. Mr. Clarke did so; and when he learned how long the man had thus mourned, and saw his apparent sincerity and earnestness, he wondered at God's so long withholding, as it seemed, a manifestation of pardon from such deep repentance. But he charged not God foolishly; but rather, on finding, after oft-repeated visits, that the lamp of life was burning low, and that the mental agony of the penitent was even hurrying on its extinction, he said tenderly but firmly, "It is not often that God thus deals with a soul deeply humbled as yours is, and so earnestly in his own appointed way seeking redemption through the blood of his Son. Sir, there must be a cause for this; and you have yet left something undone which it was, and is, your interest and duty to have done. God judge betwixt you and it."

The gentleman fixed his eyes intently on Mr. Clarke, raised himself up in bed, and gave the following narration:—"In the year ——, I was at ——, and took my passage in the ship —— for

England. Before we sailed, some merchants of that place came to the vessel, and put on board a small bag of dollars, which they gave in charge to the captain to carry to such and such persons. I saw this transaction, and marked the captain's carelessness; for instead of putting the bag in a place of safety, he left it day after day rolling on the locker. For the simple purpose of frightening him, I hid it. He made no inquiries; and we arrived at ——; and I still retained it till it should be missed. Month after month passed away, and still no inquiry was made for the lost property. The persons to whom it was consigned came to the captain for it. He remembered its having been given into his charge, but nothing more: it might have been left behind. Search was made, but no trace of the lost treasure could be discovered. All this occupied months. I had now become alarmed, and was ashamed to confess, lest it should implicate my character. I then purposely secreted the property. The captain was sued for the amount; and, having nothing to pay, he was thrown into prison, firmly maintaining his innocency of the theft, but pleading guilty to the charge of carelessness respecting his trust. He languished in prison for two years, and then died. Guilt had by this time hardened my mind. I strove to be happy by stifling my conscience with the cares and amusements of the world; but all in vain. I at last heard you preach; and then it was that the voice of God broke in upon my conscience, and reasoned with me of righteousness and of judgment to come. Hell got hold upon my spirit. I have prayed; I have deplored; I have agonized at the throne of mercy, for the sake of Christ, for pardon, but God is deaf to my prayer: Christ casts

out my petition: there is no mercy for me: I must go down into the ground unpardoned, unsaved."

The injured captain was dead, but the widow and fatherless children still lived; and Mr. Clarke suggested to the dying penitent that God claimed from him not only repentance but restitution. To this he willingly consented. The sum, with its interest and compound interest, was made up: the circumstances of the case, without the name, were made known to the widow and the persons concerned, through the medium of Mr. Clarke. Shortly afterwards the troubled mind of the dying man was calmed; "and in the full assurance of the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ, this penitent soul exchanged worlds; a warning to all the workers of iniquity; a lesson to the ministers of Christ not to charge God foolishly, when any such cases come before their spiritual cognizance; an exhortation to such as have received the wages of unrighteousness, not only to confess, but to restore to the full all ill-gotten gain; and a loud call upon all who think that they stand to take heed lest they fall."*

The Christian can have no better guide to the recovery of peace and spiritual enjoyment than the fifty-first Psalm. The moment that David's conscience responded to the prophet's "Thou art the man," his confession before God was, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest; be clear when thou judgest." And, along with confession, there was the will and the prayer to be inwardly and wholly cleansed. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right

* "Life of Dr. Adam Clarke," by his Daughter. Book V.

spirit within me." Had the sin of Ananias and Sapphira remained undiscovered and visibly unpunished, concealed in their two hearts, it would have been its own punishment—death to the happiness of both. Christian enjoyment would have been impossible till it was brought forth from its hiding place, confessed, and forsaken. In this matter there must be no reserve. The Christian must say with Cowper—

> "The dearest idol I have known,
> Whate'er that idol be,
> Help me to tear it from thy throne
> And worship only thee."

But, along with this abandonment of known sin, there must be faith in the pardoning mercy of God, and in him through whom it flows. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness," said David; "according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* The Christian, forsaking the sin which has wounded his conscience and clouded his hopes, must look to this Divine Advocate and his great propitiation, for renewed peace and confidence. Nothing but that sprinkling of atoning blood which calmed his fears when he first saw his guilt and danger can restore that hope and happiness of which conscious sin has deprived him.

But how often may one venture to apply for the cleansing of the blood of Jesus? After once and again and many times receiving forgiveness, one feels as if he ought to be ashamed of himself in still coming

*1 John ii. 1, 2.

to ask pardon. The feeling is natural, but it must be overcome. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" said Peter: "till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven,"—that is, times without number. "As often as thou art sinned against, thou art to forgive." Now Christ has taught us to pray to our Father in heaven that he will forgive us our tresspasses, *as* we forgive them that trespass against us. Put these two things together. We are taught to forgive offenders against ourselves, times without number; and we are taught to ask God to forgive us as we forgive these. Then he is prepared in his rich mercy to forgive us, not seven times, but seventy times seven—times without number. What a joy to frail, erring, sinning mortals! No honest heart will take encouragement from it to continue in sin, or to repeat sin. But burdened, broken, contrite hearts will find encouragement in it to make daily application to the open, unsealed fountain of the Saviour's blood. Ashamed of our sins we ought ever to be, but never ashamed to ask our Father to forgive them. We cannot "run in the way of God's commandments" without the "enlargement," the spiritual freedom, to be derived from the continuous enjoyment of pardoning mercy.

"Satan, who so fawningly enticed the soul to sin," says Dr. South, "will now as bitterly upbraid it for having sinned. The same hand that laid the bait and the corn to draw the silly fowl into the net, when it is once in, will have its life for coming thither. Satan never so cruelly insults, or plays the tyrant, as in this case. If God casts down the soul, he will trample upon it. He will set a new stamp and name upon

every sin. Every backsliding shall be total apostasy. Every sin against light and knowledge shall be heightened into the sin against the Holy Ghost. The conscience shall not be able to produce one argument for itself, but he will retort it. If it shall plead former assurance of God's favour, from the inward witness of his Spirit, Satan would persuade the soul that it was but a spirit of delusion. If it shall argue an interest in God's promises from former obedience, as a fruit of that faith that never fails, Satan will tell the soul that it cannot prove its former obedience to have proceeded from such a faith, since even a hypocrite may go very far. And lastly, if it would draw comfort from that abundant redemption that the death of Christ offers to all that are truly sensible of their sins, Satan will reply, that to such as, by relapsing into sin, have trampled under foot the blood of the covenant, there remains no further propitiation for sin. Now, with these and the like rejoinders will he endeavour to baffle and invalidate all a sinner's pretences to pardon."

Nothing but the constant "looking unto Jesus" will preserve the soul from sinking into despondency in view of its daily sins and shortcomings. "I deeply sympathize with you in the consciousness of sin," said the Rev. George Wagner, in writing to a friend. "My sins often seem to me infinite in number, and scarlet in guilt. . . . . But despair?—never. Never, till God sweeps away his own unchangeable promises, and obliterates the cross of his beloved Son; never, whilst Jesus lives, and is *what* he is—tender and mighty to save. Humiliation is of God; and, oh, I long to lie lower before him,—to be subdued, lowly, and still. But despair is of Satan; and we cannot resist it too earnestly."

It may be, however, that the believer's despondency or gloom does not arise from the consciousness of specific sins, but from an *inward sense of imperfection, and from a general feeling of the power of remaining corruption.* Many a child of God has felt his spirit sink within him from an oppressive sense of deficiency, when he has contemplated the duty of "walking even as Christ walked," and of "purifying himself even as he is pure;" and no comfort should be administered that would lower his standard of duty, or satisfy him with an inferior aim. But it is well to remember that the inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit constitutes the very distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate, the children of God and the children of the wicked one. The unregenerate man may find his judgment often at variance with his inclinations, but he can have no love to God, no delight in his law, no desire after fellowship with him or conformity to his holiness. These are the principles of the new nature, against which, to the very end, the old will continue to strive. And this inward conflict forms part of the recorded experience of the most advanced and elevated and spiritually minded Christians.

Nor can it be regarded as other than an unfavourable symptom of the spiritual condition of any professor of faith in Christ, that he should fancy that he "has already attained, or is already perfect." Either he is using words in a sense very different from that which was attached to them by the apostle Paul (as probably some do), or he is, in the language of the apostle John, "deceiving himself." The man who indulges a comfortable self-complacency, and is pleased with the measure of his spiritual acquirements, is very

unlike that servant of the Lord who said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In the passage in which these words occur* there is "a beautiful union of Christian principles,—simple, thankful, exclusive dependence, for present and final acceptance with God, on the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; combined with steadfast, ardent, influential desires after an increase of spiritual attainments,—after an accelerating progress in the life of faith, and love, and holiness. This is the example which every Christian should emulate."

When the apostle said, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,"† there is no reason to suppose that he had ceased to feel that "law in his members" which had once warred with "the law of his mind," or that he was no longer conscious of sin. "The sense of sin and the triumph of faith were experienced together. And in proportion, indeed, as the love of God and the holy visions of hope were felt to be captivating, would the remaining tendencies to evil be deplored as burdensome and afflicting. Building on the same foundation, and drawing from the same fulness, we may adopt the same language of humble yet steadfast confidence, of lively satisfaction, and exulting hope."

* Philipians iii. 7—14. † Romans viii. 38, 39.

There is no more fruitful source of despondency than *ignorance or misapprehension of truth.* And if known truth be overlooked or neglected, the same unhappy effects will follow. To this cause mainly we ascribe the despondency of Hezekiah in the prospect of death. The ode which he composed after his recovery, as a record of his sentiments when he thought himself dying, and of his gratitude when his life was prolonged, is preserved in Holy Scripture;* and it is with mingled and painful feelings that one reads it. The melancholy which pervades it is unworthy of "good king Hezekiah." True it is that a long life was the common earthly reward of the faithful servants of God under the Jewish economy: true, likewise, that Hezekiah was at this time childless, without a son to sit on his throne. And in these circumstances the prospect of death was doubly painful; the destroyer *seemed* to come as a messenger of divine displeasure. As a man, it may be added, that Hezekiah was constitutionally of feeble mind, lacking in vigour and steadfast energy; a mind which, but for the holy principle which governed him, would have rendered him the victim of circumstances, and left him at the mercy of wind and tide. And all this has to be taken into account in reading the dolorous strains of the king of Judah.

But, after all, the principal occasion of the gloom and sadness which covered his spirit on what he deemed his death-bed was, that he looked at the things which are seen and temporal, and not at the things which are unseen and eternal. In this he was not a worthy son of Abraham, nor a worthy disciple of Moses. By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of

* Isaiah xxxviii. 9—20.

promise as in a strange country; for he looked for that city whose foundations are everlasting, whose builder and maker is God. The patriarchs, confessing themselves to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, died in faith, desiring a better country, that is, an heavenly. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked away from that which was before his eyes unto the recompense of the reward; he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. All this, and more than this, was known to Hezekiah. The book of his God told how Enoch, the holiest of men, was taken away "in the meridian of his days," not because he displeased, but because he pleased, God. And he was taken away, surely, not to dwell in a land of darkness, not to be a shade in the land of shades, not to sleep in a state of unconsciousness, but still to serve and still to enjoy the God he had honoured on earth. His translation was not a punishment, but a reward; and the inference was not far to seek, that the state into which he went was better than that from which he was taken. Hezekiah knew it, and believed it; but for the moment he forgot it—his heart forgot it: he looked only at the things which are seen and temporal. The darkness of the grave filled the whole horizon around him, and intercepted his vision, so that he could see, he could realize nothing beyond.

We must say, that this state of mind was unworthy of him. It is not to be explained by the comparative obscurity which in his day hung over the doctrine of a future state. Even now that Christ has brought life and incorruption forth into the very effulgence of

noonday, we find many a heart breaking and moaning as did Hezekiah's; we find many a poet pouring forth similar strains, and describing the grave and the dreariness beyond, as if they had never heard of a blessed heaven, where, in the language of a poem with which Hezekiah was as familiar as we are, there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore. The despondency of the king of Judah was produced not by a want of knowledge, but by a want of faith. Not, indeed, that he had no faith in the better country which Abraham had looked for and long since reached, but his faith sank in its weakness beneath his sorrows, instead of in its strength sustaining him under them; its eye was so dimmed with weeping, that it could not see the land that was afar off. He looked at death only from its earthly side, and, regarded exclusively from this side, it was dark indeed.

Through the same earthly-sided view of the events of life, Christians are often covered with gloom, and yield themselves up to doubting thoughts and despondent feelings. They forget for a time the first principles of their own faith, and interpret events in the light of a present existence only. So interpreted, they are perplexing and unintelligible. But let us remember our own belief, that, beyond the threescore years and ten of the present, there are endless cycles of ages in another state, the certain inheritance of these spirits of ours, and the mystery is dispelled. "Preaching would kill me in three months," said young Martin Luther to the superior of his order, when he was urging him to engage in this holy work. "What then!" was the reply; "do you not think that God needs servants in heaven?" When we are

stunned by the sudden and early death of men gifted with power to bless their generation, and these cut down when their gifts and graces have reached maturity, and are most wholly consecrated to the world's and the church's good, let us not forget that, like Enoch, they have only been taken to occupy a higher sphere. Man has been "made in vain," if made for this life only: his many and mighty gifts must be regarded as a waste of creative expenditure, if they perish with the body. Ephemera may be born for a day; their capacity is equalled by their brief life. But when a man, gifted with the power of climbing the heights, and enjoying the beatitudes of spiritual existence, is suddenly deprived of life, while yet he has only entered on his upward course, we naturally seek a solution of the mystery in the continuance of his existence in another state.

In the experience of Christian and Hopeful in the grounds and castle of Giant Despair, both these causes of despondency are seen to operate—the consciousness of sin, and the temporary forgetfulness of known truth. After a season of great delight on the banks of the river of God, the pilgrims found their way rough, and their feet suffered by reason of their travels. They were thus tempted to turn aside into a road which seemed to run alongside the highway, only free from its hot dust and rough stones. Soon, however, they found this bypath diverging they knew not whither, and they adventured to return. But darkness overtook them; and when morning dawned, they were found by Giant Despair asleep in his grounds, and were cast into a very dark dungeon, where they lay "from Wednesday morning till Saturday night," without food, or drink, or light.

During this period they were subjected to great suffering by the grim owner of Doubting Castle. But on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer to almost break of day. "Now a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out in this passionate speech: 'What a fool,' quoth he, 'am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.' Then said Hopeful, 'That's good news, good brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try.'

"Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door; whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outer door that leads into the castle yard, and with this key opened that door also. After, he went to the iron gate—for that must be opened too—but that lock went extremely hard, yet the key did open it. Then they burst open the gate, to make their escape with speed. But that gate, as it opened, made such a creaking, that it waked Giant Despair, who, hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they went on and came to the king's highway again, and so were safe, because they were out of his jurisdiction.

"Now when they were gone over the stile, they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that stile to prevent those that should come after from falling into the hand of Giant Despair. So they consented to erect there a pillar, and to engrave on the side thereof, 'Over this stile is the

way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the king of the celestial country, and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims.' Many therefore that followed after read what was written, and escaped the danger."

The danger was indeed great. It was not by an enormity, like the sin of David or of Peter, that Hopeful and Christian were brought into misery. It was by a departure from the way of duty, imperceptible to the world, and almost imperceptible to themselves, that they passed into the grounds of Giant Despair. "So deceitful are the ways of sin, that the first steps of travel in them seemed to these pilgrims but as an indulgence to wearied, sorefooted virtue." But when a man refuses to undergo such labour and suffering for Christ as lie in the way of his duty, he will have to suffer far more inwardly than he ever could have done outwardly. Yet we often forget when hardness comes, that our business is to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. "The pilgrims seem to have forgotten this for a season, and to have expected nothing but enjoyment all the rest of the way. But the river and the way for a time parted, and the way was rough; so still, as they went, they wished for a better. Here were the first beginnings of discontent, and they ought to have repressed them. They should have said, It is true this way is not so pleasant as the meadow, but it is the Lord's way, and the best, doubtless, for us to travel in: these trials are of God's making for us, and they come in the way of our duty; so we must still go on, and be thankful. But they said, 'How very rough is the way, how painful, how fatiguing! I wish there were a better way; can we find an easier

way?' When Christians thus allow themselves to wish for a better way than the way of God's appointment, Satan is generally at hand to point out some way that *seems* easier and better, and to tempt the soul to wander in it. A man speedily enters into temptation when he becomes discontented with God's allotments: then Satan presents allurements; and from wishing for a better way, the soul goes into a worse. The discontented wish is father to a sinful will. *I wish for a better* is followed by *I will have a better;* and so the soul goes astray."

On discovering their position, the pilgrims judged rightly that it was their immediate duty to return to the highway which they had forsaken. But they found themselves encompassed with difficulty, and were content to enjoy "a little shelter" on their way back, resting in something short of an unreserved confession of their sin, and a believing application to the blood which cleanseth from all sin. This delay, this trust in something else than the promise of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, only added to their sorrows. And that which availed them at last—the key of promise—was in their possession all along, forgotten and unused. The "joy of God's salvation" was "restored" to them immediately on their looking with contrition and faith to the Lamb of God.

The *neglect of duty* is perhaps as prevalent an occasion of despondency as the commission of sin; and it operates in two ways. (1.) It clouds the conscience and oppresses the heart by secret misgivings and inward conflicts. The Christian's peace cannot "flow as a river," when at every step it is marred by doubts as to the rightness of his conduct. The "with-

holding" from the service of Christ, "more than is meet," of that property which God has bestowed on him; the restraining of labour and prayer, by which the kingdom of Christ might be advanced in the world; the omission of duty in any department of the Christian's life must be as a cankerworm at the root of his happiness. (2.) Besides, spiritual exercise is as essential to spiritual health and enjoyment as physical exercise is to bodily strength and comfort. And the neglect of duty is the neglect of spiritual exercise.

It is told of the Rev. Andrew Fuller that for years he preached comfort to the church of which he was pastor, but no comfort came. They sought it earnestly, but did not find it. They drooped and mourned while taught and watched over by a man of eminent piety. But, when they began to *work*,—to work for Christ, in connection especially with the then infant mission to the heathen, that which eluded their grasp before came unsought. They became happy in their faith, in acting out their faith's first principles. The experience of the pastor seems to have much resembled that of the flock. "My engagement in the mission undertaking," he wrote to a friend, "had a wonderful influence in reviving true religion in my soul; and from that time, notwithstanding all my family afflictions, I have been one of the happiest of men. 'Then shall I run,' said the psalmist, 'in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' And truly I know of nothing which has so enlarged my heart as engaging in a work the object of which is the salvation of the world. I have often observed that many good people miss their objects, and live in doubt about their own Christianity all their days,

because they make this their direct and principal object of pursuit. They read, hear, meditate—everything, *in order to find out whether they be Christians.* Let them but seek the glory of Christ's kingdom, the spread of his cause, etc., and a knowledge of their own interest in it would be amongst the things which would be 'added unto them.' If we are so selfish as to care about nothing but our own individual safety, God will righteously so order it that we shall not obtain our desire, but shall live in suspense on that subject; while if we had served him, and sought his glory, and the good of others' souls as well as our own, our own safety would have appeared manifest. It is thus that God interweaves the good of his creatures; ordering it so that the happiness of one part shall arise from their pursuing that of another, rather than from a direct pursuit of their own. It is thus in domestic felicity, and thus in religion. Blessed be God for thus encouraging a principle which, if it did but universally prevail, would be productive of universal peace and happiness. 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'"

"There may be a great deal of backsliding in heart—of encroaching worldliness—of declension in spirituality of mind and in the life and energy of vital godliness—where there are no flagrant outbreakings of sin in the conduct. This state may arise, amongst other causes of it, from the prosperity of this life—the world gaining ground in the affections, and God losing it. There is then a declension in LOVE; and, as it is love that 'casts out fear,' we need not wonder that fear should find entrance, as love declines. The heart is no longer 'right with God,' but halting and hesitating between him and rivals. The world

and mammon contest the ascendency with him—things seen with things unseen—earth with heaven. The word of God and secret prayer are neglected; or the one is read with carelessness and irregularity, and the other performed with cold formality and frequent omission on trivial grounds. 'The cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things have entered in,' the word is in danger of being 'choked and rendered unfruitful.' The man continues honest and industrious, and chargeable with no immorality—no breach of honour or of faith—in the transaction of his worldly affairs; and he still appears in his place, with at least almost wonted punctuality, in the house of God. He is 'not slothful in business;' but he is no longer what he once was—'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' The energy of religious principle is relaxed; the warmth of religious feeling has cooled; the pleasure of religious worship is abated; the cheerful activity of religious zeal is paralysed; and the open-handed readiness of religious charity is grudgingly restrained. His conscience tells him all this. He tries in vain to keep it quiet. He endeavours to persuade himself that he is only more rationally and soberly religious than he was; that he has renounced no article of faith; and that, in the circumstances in which Providence has placed him, a little more conformity to the world has become unavoidable, and even in some degree, he is inclined to think, a duty—to take off the offensiveness of religion in his own circle, and prevent his 'good from being evil spoken of.' But, in spite of all the sophistry by which he tries to keep on good terms with himself, he is ill at ease. He hears the voice of his Lord saying, 'I have against thee, that thou hast

left thy first love;' and he is filled with disquieting self-reproaches and tormenting fears. If the world succeed in subduing and silencing these, his danger is indeed imminent. His apprehensions are well founded and salutary. What, then, is the effect they should have? How are they to be satisfactorily quieted, and true peace to be restored to the soul? In one way only. He must return to his first love. That love alone will cast them out. God must resume the place in the heart, from which he has been unworthily deposed."*

In *the personal afflictions of life* we find another common occasion of despondency. It was when driven from Jerusalem by the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom, that David wrote the plaintive strains of the forty-second and forty-third Psalms. "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" But there was no despair in his sorrow; there was hope blended with his grief.

"I will say unto God, my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me;
While they say unto me daily, Where is thy God?
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

The seventy-seventh Psalm is written in a tone of deeper melancholy. Its author, for a time, "refused to be comforted." He turned away every topic of consolation, as if in love with misery. The "remembrance" of God only increased his trouble. The night—the season of repose—brought him no relief;

* Dr. Wardlaw: Sermons, 1829.

his eyes were quenched with incessant weeping. But we find him at last stretching out his hand and laying hold of the divine strength.

The language used by the "patient" Job, on one occasion, and the feelings which prompted it, are very instructive. "Oh! that I knew where I might find Him!"* he said, in the anguish of his heart. Miserable comforters were his three friends who came to condole with him on his varied and crushing afflictions. Their accusations formed the bitterest portions of the cup which he had to drink. He could bear much; he had borne much, and had said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?"† And "at the hand of the Lord," he was prepared to "receive" still more of such evil. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."‡ But the denial of his sincerity, the charge of hidden, aggravated wickedness, he could not bear. "To-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."§ As if he said, —My sighs may be deep, but they bear no proportion to my sufferings. Oh! that I knew where I might find God; that I might come even to his tribunal! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments—arguments drawn from my secret as well as my public life. I would know the words which he would answer me, and would understand what he would say unto me. God's judgment would be very different from that of my friends. Will he plead against me with his great power? Will he make use of his power to overwhelm and confound me? Will

*Job xxiii. 3.
†Job i. 21; ii. 10.
‡Job xiii. 15.
§Job xxiii. 2.

he take advantage of omnipotence to triumph over me? No; but he would put strength in me. Dust and ashes though I be, he would enable me to set forth my cause before him. He would not awe me by his dread majesty, but strengthen me by his mercy. There, in his presence, the righteous man, conscious of his integrity, might argue his case before him. Then should I be delivered for ever from those who would condemn me. But I know not where to find him. I cannot bring my cause to his throne. I turn myself to all parts of the heavens, but I see him not, and hear him not. I turn me to the east, toward the rising sun. I see there the glories of his creation; but HE is not there. Disappointed, I turn me to the west, and watch the setting sun, and hope, as his last beams fade from my view, that God will reveal himself to me. But I perceive him not; there are no indications of his presence coming forth, that I may argue my case before him; and my soul, like the world, is left in darkness. I turn me to the north, where God "doth work;" where brilliant lights do play and shine, rivalling the glories of the rising and setting sun; but these lights are cold and chilly, and reveal no God to my soul. To the south I turn me at the last; but in the burning and impassable wastes, and in the unknown seas that stretch out there, God hideth himself, that I cannot see him. I have searched the heavens round, but I cannot find Him before whose throne I would plead my cause, and whose judgment on my case I desire to hear.

What, then, should Job do? Lie down and despair, to be crushed beneath the iron wheels of a resistless fate? No, no. He holds fast his confidence in God and in his own integrity." "God knoweth the way

that I take, though I cannot see him. He sees me; and, however men may misunderstand my character, he does not. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold that hath been tested in the crucible, and that comes out the more pure the intenser the heat has been. My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

It will be seen that at the very time Job was saying, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him," God was very near to him. He needed not to be sought in the east or west, or north or south. He was there, watching the furnace into which he had placed his servant, hearing his words and the words of his friends; weighing them all, and prepared, at the fitting time, to manifest himself, and pronounce his own infallible judgment. It will be seen, too, that Job knew all this at the very time; that when he was saying, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him," he still had faith that God was with him, knowing his path, and testing his character as in a furnace. These two states of mind—the desire to find God, and the confidence which he had in God's present superintendence of this whole trial which he was enduring—may seem inconsistent with each other. But they are not so; for his language was not that of unbelief, but of impatience. Stung by the accusations of his friends, he would that God should now, at once, arbitrate between them. This was his infirmity. His faith might have taught him to say, as one did in a later age, "My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up." * And another: "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." † If Job had acted in the spirit of these words, he would have found that "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." ‡

"If the great condition of spiritual vitality be the union of the soul in time with the Lord of eternity,—if the nature of that union must mainly consist, on the part of the disciple, in humble and confiding trust,—is it not among the first requisites of the religious life that every obstacle should be cleared away which may prevent in the heart the full formation of that state of humble dependence in which the essence of its blessedness on earth is comprised? Now, affliction is the very voice of God speaking to the heart of man its nothingness. Sermons may fail; but sorrow is more eloquent than sermons. It is not the gospel, but it is the herald of the gospel; it is the very 'voice of him that crieth' in the vast 'wilderness' of the desolated heart, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight *in this desert* a highway for our

* Psalm lvii. 1—3. † Micah vii. 7—9. ‡ Lamentations iii. 26.

God.' 'Blessed,' indeed, 'are the mourners' to whom their mourning has brought humiliation."

The best corrective of the despondency which arises from our personal afflictions is to recognize the love that administers them, and the loving end for which they are sent. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." *

The child of God may be racked with pain, frowned on by the world, immured in the darkest cell; the intensest flame of the martyr's stake may blaze around him; he may lie on the last floating spar of the wreck in which his fellows have gone down, a castaway from man and earthly hope; he may look around in eager desire to descry the approach of help, and see nothing but water—water everywhere; above, nothing but empty space. But that child of God is no castaway from the care and love of his Father in heaven. The divine form that bends over him lovingly may be unseen, and the mystery of the divine purpose which leaves him in that peril may be unknown, but God is there—there in his watchful love—there as certainly, and with as kind an intent, as when he gathered around him the smiling faces of those loved ones who shall soon be fatherless. Oh! to have it burnt into our very souls or made a part of our spiritual being, that God is ever with us, acting a Father's part, exercising his own wise discretion as to the best means of accomplishing the

* Isaiah xlix. 14—16.

purposes of his love! It would make us strong, holy, happy.

In the providential discipline of God, there is an admixture of the severe and the gentle. He comes to us sometimes in the whirlwind, and sometimes in the still, small voice. He disturbs our quiet, and breaks our peace, that we may remember that this is not our rest; he woos and attracts us by his kindness, that we may confide in him. The hurricane and the zephyr, the storm and the calm, the cloud and the sunshine, each has its office to perform. It may not be God's will that we should be rich; but it is his will that we should be holy, and that we should live by faith, and not by sight. His manner of leading us through the wilderness is chosen in the exercise of paternal wisdom and love, to bring this to pass. Every rude wind that blows, every warm ray that shines, has one mission. Whether we encamp by the bitter waters of Marah, or by the sweet and shaded wells of Elim, it is for one end—our progressive holiness; and we may feel assured that the proportions in which the severe and the gentle are admixed are determined by infallible wisdom.

"Shall not this knowledge calm our hearts, and bid vain conflicts cease?
Ay, when they commune with themselves in holy hours of peace;
And feel that by the lights and clouds through which our pathway lies,
By the beauty and the grief alike, we are training for the skies."

Dr. Cheever tells us that, when standing on the summit of a Swiss mountain, it was sunshine all around him, while the valley beneath was covered with a thick mist. He could hear the chime of bells, the hum of busy labour, and the lowing of cattle buried in the mist, and faintly coming up to him from the fields and villages. Now and then, a bird darted up out of the

mist into the clear sun and air, and sailed in playful circles, and then dived and disappeared again below the surface. "The bird darting from the mist into the sunlight," said Dr. Malan, to him as he recounted the experience of the day, "is faith—an emblem of faith." "For," says Dr. Cheever, "so as that soaring bird from the earth,when it was dark and raining, flew up and up, and onward, undiscouraged, till heaven was shining on her wings, and the clouds were all below her, and then returned—not to forget that sight, but to sing to her companions about it, and to dwell upon it till clear weather; so does our faith, when all looks dark and discouraging here, when within and around there is nothing but mist and rain, rise and still rise, and soar onwards and upwards till heaven is visible, and God is shining in the face of Jesus Christ; and then, as it were, comes back with glad tidings to tell the soul to be of good cheer, for that heaven is not far off; and to sing even like the nightingale, in the darkness and the rain, for that soon again there shall be daybreak and fair weather. And the memory of one such view of the gates of heaven, with the bright Alps of truth glittering around you, is enough to sustain the soul through many a weary day of her pilgrimage. When you see the face of Christ, all the darkness is forgotten, and you wonder what it was you were doubting about, and what it was that could have made you so perplexed and desponding."

To thoughtful and speculative minds, there is probably no occasion of despondency so constant and painful as *the disorders and irregularities of our fallen world.* Of such despondency we have a scriptural

example in the seventy-third Psalm. The subject of this affecting poem is the difficulty of accounting, on the principles of reason, for the unequal distributions of the present state, in which bad men are frequently prosperous, while men of goodness and piety are often distressed and afflicted.

We learn from several instances which are recorded in the Scriptures, that this was a source of extreme perplexity and trial in former ages. Nor is there even now any sufficient means of removing this difficulty, but that to which the psalmist had recourse, and which he derived from the discoveries of revelation. There is a future state, a future retribution, in the light of which it is seen that prosperity is not in itself any proof of the divine approbation nor adversity any proof of divine displeasure; and in the light of which the servants of God, notwithstanding all their sufferings, are enabled to rest in the conclusion that "God is good to Israel."

A *present* state of rewards and punishments, proportioned to merit and demerit, will be found on reflection, to be an impossibility. "Such is the condition of human life, such are the connections and relations subsisting between the righteous and the wicked, that the one could not be exclusively punished, and the other exclusively rewarded. Were God, for example, to bless the fields of the righteous with a supernatural abundance, the wicked would still share in the benefit; and were he to smite with mildew the fields of the wicked, society in general would suffer by the infliction; so that a second set of miracles would be necessary to rectify the inconveniences of the first; and the divine government, instead of advancing with steady and dignified step

towards the accomplishment of its objects, would present a series of broken and almost ineffectual movements."*

The fountain of all difficulties, like those of the author of the seventy-third Psalm, is the origin of sin, and the consequent overflow of wickedness and suffering over the earth. All minor perplexities are lost and absorbed in this greater mystery; and, could we fathom this, we should find no other depth too great for us. But we cannot. Men have laboured in vain, and spent their strength for naught, in the endeavour. And this unpenetrated, undispelled darkness hangs over many spirits, involving them in perpetual doubt and sadness.

How shall we help ourselves in this matter? Not, assuredly, by any fresh attempt to solve the mystery, but by an increase of "faith in God." And there are grounds that will justify a faith and trust in God which will raise the soul into a region of unclouded light. For example, let us set before ourselves the *positive* evidences which are within our reach, of the *perfect holiness* of God; and when we have got fast hold of this one truth, let us follow it in its bearing on the existing condition of the world. These evidences are many and varied. Everything that goes to prove the Bible to be of God is indirectly an evidence of the divine holiness; for the Bible is full of this blessed doctrine. It not only sets it forth as one of many divine attributes, but as being the very crown and beauty and glory of them all. It is the glory of God's power that it is a holy power, of his wisdom that it is a holy wisdom, of his

* Fleming's "Plea for the Ways of God to Man."

love that it is a holy love. And this peculiarity of the Bible "image" of God is itself an unanswerable argument that the Bible is not of the earth, or of man.

By other lines of argument, likewise, do we reach the conclusion that God is holy. We cannot otherwise interpret our own nature. Fallen and sinful as we are, there is sufficient left of our original constitution to prove that he who made us is a holy God. Our conscience, with the distinction which it makes between right and wrong, and the frightful chastisements with which it visits our wrong doings, would be an inexplicable mystery on any other supposition than that it has been planted within us to bear witness to a holy God, and to govern men according to his holy will. Then in the outside world, notwithstanding all its impurities and crimes, and all the successes which often attend them, there is abundant evidence of the presence of a Holy One who still rules among the children of men, and rules in righteousness. The truth of such divine sayings as these, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness," "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," "The way of transgressors is hard," "Be sure your sin will find you out," has been attested by the experience of all ages. And the world's own observation has originated many proverbs which echo the same truth:—"Honesty is the best policy;" "Honesty may be dear-bought, but can never be a dear pennyworth;" "Virtue is its own reward;" "Virtue and happiness are mother and daughter." What are these but witnesses to a law of holiness which underlies the corruptions of the world, and cannot be extinguished by them? And this is the law of God,—like himself immutably holy.

Let us then but get hold of this one truth—"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"—and follow where it will lead us, and there is no appeal of Scripture to which we shall respond more heartily than that of the psalmist—"Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."* So long as we remember and have faith in God's holiness, we are not to be overwhelmed by the mystery of evil. True it is, that the fact, the glorious and unchallengeable fact, of God's holiness does not explain the mystery, but only deepens it. But, if held fast, it will relieve our minds of many saddening and painful misgivings, and enable us to rest in the conviction that, if ever the solution shall be found, it will be found in a quarter that shall not dim the brightness or tarnish the honour of the divine name.

To increase our faith in God, the same course of argument should be followed in regard to the divine goodness. The positive evidence that God is *good* should be studied, and the conclusion to which they lead should be followed in its bearings on the existence of evil. Of these evidences we cannot attempt to give even an outline in this place. Of one fact alone we will remind the reader. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."† And the apostolic inference from this fact cannot be gainsaid. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"‡ The inference may be varied to our present purpose, and still retain its obvious force: "He who so loved the world

* Psalm xcvii. 12. † John iii. 16. ‡ Romans viii. 32.

that he gave his only begotten Son to save it—he who spared not that Son when he had taken upon him the form of a servant, but delivered him to death for us all—has given therein the highest imaginable evidence of goodness, a goodness which could not have been wanting in the mysterious hour of the birth of sin, a goodness that cannot fail now in aught that wisdom and holiness approve." The conclusion is inevitable. "God is love"—"God is good." And more than this, said Christ, "God *alone* is good."* Among men there is no real, true, perfect goodness; in God there is nothing but true, real, perfect goodness. He is the only Potentate, the only wise; he only hath immortality; and in the same sense is he only good. There are other potentates,—others are immortal, others are wise, others too are good; but he alone is mighty, immortal, wise, and good—absolutely, self-existently, independently. This is the idea which Christ gives us of God. While we are asking, sometimes with no small solicitude and no small doubt, whether God is good, he who came to reveal God, who is himself the revelation of God, proclaims not only that he is good, but that he *alone* is good.

Let us embrace and hold fast this truth, and while it will leave the history of evil still unexplained, it will cast out of our hearts those unbelieving surmises which haunt us and embitter our spirits. It will give strength and buoyancy to our faith in God, and help us to dwell in a region where we shall breathe more freely, and run, with more elastic step, in the way of God's commandments. The *positive* evidences of the divine holiness and of the divine love cannot be set aside by appearances or facts which

* Matthew xix. 17.

it is beyond our power to explain. If I have had life-long evidence that my father is a man of integrity and a man of love, an integrity and a love which have been tested a thousand times, and have always come forth from the trial with greater brightness, it does not become me to tremble for his honour when circumstances occur which I do not understand, and cannot explain. My faith in him will be unshaken. I will accept the known as a key to the meaning of the unknown. I will hold fast my confidence that, when the time of revelation comes, his character will be found still radiant with light and love. Much more let me act and feel thus in reference to my heavenly Father. I am but as a very little child, who, at the dawn of his infant reason, tries to penetrate the thoughts and understand the doings of his father. I can think now only as a child, and speak only as a child. Let me then cultivate a child's humility and a child's teachableness, and be content to trust my Father till I enter on the manhood of my nature in a higher state, where that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part shall be done away.

"Be strong, be strong, nor fruitlessly revolve,
Darkling, the riddles which you cannot solve,
But do the works that unto you belong;
Believing that for every mystery,
For all the death, the darkness, and the curse
Of this dim universe,
Needs a solution full of love must be;
And that the way whereby ye may attain
Nearest to this, is not through broodings vain,
And half-rebellious questionings of God,
But by a patient seeking to fulfil
The purpose of his everlasting will,
Treading the path which lowly men have trod;
Since it is ever they who are too proud
For this, that are the foremost and most loud
To judge his hidden judgments; these are still
The most perplexed and lost at his mysterious will."

Shall we add to these causes of spiritual despondency *the sovereign hiding of God's countenance?* Is it true that "the Lord, on purpose to display his wisdom and sovereignty, to try the graces of his people, to mortify their pride, and teach them the necessity of adventuring as sinners to trust simply in Christ," withdraws from them the comforts of the Holy Spirit? But what is meant when it is said that God hides his face in sovereignty from his people? "It can mean nothing else," says Dr. Wardlaw, "than his withholding for a time his grace and Spirit. It is a believing view of the divine character, as revealed in Christ, that gives our minds peace and joy. It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to keep this view steadily before our minds. To be under the hiding of God's countenance, therefore, must be to have this Spirit so withheld from us, as that our minds are unable to discover the view of God which is fitted to give us peace and spiritual enjoyment. This, then, is what God is conceived to do in sovereignty,—not as the expression of any particular displeasure against unbelief and sin prevailing in his people at the time, but, as it is alleged, for the trial of their faith."

"Now here again let us ask ourselves," continues Dr. Wardlaw, "what, in such circumstances, is meant by the trial of faith? To what does such trial amount? It amounts to this—that a believer may be sincerely seeking the Lord, desirous to trust in him, and to rejoice in his name, and yet be unable to find him, to exercise confidence, to obtain joy, to catch a single ray of the light of his countenance—he may be dull, lifeless, dark, despairing; and all this, in consequence of the *sovereign withdrawment* of the Divine Spirit. Is not there something in this that appears at

least too analogous to caprice? And is it quite in harmony with such assurances as God gives his people in his word—'I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain'?—and with the many and tender declarations of his paternal kindness, and backwardness to afflict? Nay, more:—even the *desire* to trust and to rejoice in God must be inspired and maintained by the Holy Spirit. And, if so, then the hypothesis sets before us a child of God labouring after the gratification of a desire which the Spirit has produced,—and, for want of the further influence of the same Spirit, labouring in vain—incapable of attaining what he sighs after and strives to reach: that is, in plain terms, we have the Spirit of God tormenting one of his children, by inspiring a desire which he will not satisfy. Is such a supposition at all consistent with right views of the all-gracious character of the Divine Father, and of the kindly affections of his heart towards his spiritual offspring? And, further still: it continues the command of God at all times, that his people should trust in him. But trust cannot be exercised unless that view of the divine character be discerned by the soul, which is fitted to inspire it. Are we, then, to imagine the blessed God arbitrarily withholding that view from the mind, and still commanding the exercise of the confidence? Be it far from us. Would not this be to liken him to those Egyptian taskmasters, who required the bricks, but refused to furnish the straw? There is a manifest and wide difference between this hypothesis of sovereign or arbitrary withdrawment, and withdrawment in token of displeasure against sin and backsliding, whether in heart or in life. When God 'hides his face' on this account, there is perfect righteousness in

the procedure, and perfect consistency with every attribute of his character and every intimation of his word. God says by his prophets, 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear;'—'When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood;'—'Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.'"*

The doctrine which is thus repudiated is often supposed to be taught by Isaiah, who says,† "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." To "walk in darkness, and have no light," is supposed to mean to want a comfortable sense of the divine favour in the soul; and this is conceived to arise from the sovereign hiding of God's countenance, the persons afflicted by it being described as "fearing the Lord, and obeying the voice of his word." Darkness and light, however, are well-known emblems of adversity and prosperity, of sorrow and joy. The whole chapter is a prophecy of the sufferings of the promised Saviour. And it is more than probable that the tenth verse has a direct and primary reference to the state of the minds of the Lord's disciples at the time of his death, and in the interval between his death and resurrection.

* Isaiah lix. 1, 2; i. 15. Micah. iii. 4. † Isaiah l. 10.

They did indeed walk in darkness, and had no light. It was a time of dejection, perplexity, and fear. And in this situation, which sprang, after all, from their ignorance and unbelief, they are admonished to "trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay upon their God." The scene would soon change, and the darkness be made light before them. "You now have sorrow," said the Saviour, on the eve of his last sufferings; "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." * And it was so. their sorrow was very soon changed into joy

The words of the prophet were "applicable, in the full spirit of them, to all the circumstances of adversity wherein the people of God, in the course of his providence, may be placed—to every season in which perplexing dispensations may try their faith. If everything in the Divine procedure were as clear to us as it is to him—if, like him, we could look through all the gloomy and perplexing scene, and 'see the end from the beginning'—there would then be no room for the exercise of trust: the use of this Christian grace would be entirely done away. It is when they who 'fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, walk in the darkness and have no light,' that they are called to 'trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay upon their God.' This is the very season for confidence."

Dr. Wardlaw, from whose judicious thoughts on this point we have quoted so largely, concludes that "the cause of religious despondency, with all its distracting doubts and fears, is, in every instance, though with many varieties, to be found, not in the gospel, nor in the sovereignty of God, but in the believer himself; that, in all cases in which it is not

*See John xvi. 19—22.

the effect of corporeal or mental disease, its source is some form or other of unbelief or sin; that God never withdraws from his people, but when his people, in life or in heart, withdraw from him; but that, on the contrary, he will always delight to make them happier in the enjoyment of his love, in proportion as they cleave to him in faith, and 'run in the way of his commandments.' The lesson is unspeakably comfortable and pleasing; nor is it less safe and salutary: and in proportion as it is thus desirable that it should be true, must it be satisfactory to our minds to find it in harmony with every view given us, by the inspired record, of the character and ways of God."

There are some who will not doubt of their state before God, when they ought. "No sentiment can be more unscriptural, more irrational, more shocking, than the sentiment that sin should never make a believer doubt of his state; that, whatever may be the evils into which he falls, doubts and fears are only additions to his guilt; that, all his iniquities having been atoned for by the blood of his Saviour, no sin, be it ever so heinous, should at any time trouble his spirit, or darken the light of his joy. This is the most monstrous and miserable of all delusions. The very end of Christ's coming was 'to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities.' The very purpose for which 'he gave himself' was, to 'purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' To say, therefore, that believers should be equally confident of their state, into whatever sins they fall, amounts to saying, that they should be equally assured of their interest in Christ, whether this end of his death

be answered in them or not,—whether they be 'turned from their iniquities,' whether they be 'purified,' and 'zealous of good works,' or not. The tendency of all sin must be to lead into darkness. The New Testament Scriptures assure us—'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' a declaration standing in close connection with another, by which we are taught that conformity to God in holiness is the evidence of interest in his pardoning mercy through the atonement—'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'" *

It is an error in an opposite direction, to maintain that doubts and fears are essential to a right or healthy Christian experience. "There are some of God's children who keep themselves in a state of incessant unhappiness and gloom, by poring over their sins and failings, and forgetting to connect this with a believing view of the atonement; ever lamenting their own unworthiness, without taking into view the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain; looking to themselves, without looking to Christ. They have had the notion, unhappily introduced into their minds, that doubts and fears constitute an almost essential part of Christian experience. Under this impression, they rather cherish the gloom. They are unhappy *with* their fears, but they would be no less unhappy *without* them; for without them, they have learned to think, no *experienced Christian* can long remain. Such persons, too, are apt at times to be a little uncharitable in their sentiments of such believers as

*1 John i. 9, 7,

appear to possess anything like unintermitted enjoyment. They regard them with a mixture of envy and suspicion. They shake their heads, and heave a sigh, and say, 'Oh! they surely do not know themselves—they must be strangers to "the plague of their own hearts;" if they were not, they could not be thus uniformly cheerful.' As if there were unwarrantable presumption in having the mind in that state which the gospel, as good news from heaven, is fitted to impart, and which it is the very purpose of its gracious Author, by means of it, to produce and to maintain; and as if doubt were an indispensable evidence of faith, fear a manifestation of hope, and depression and melancholy the proof of an interest in the 'glad tidings of great joy.'

"An exemplification of the justice of these observations occurs in the memoir of Mrs. Dr. Paterson, of St. Petersburg. Some time after she was brought to the knowledge of Christ, she fell in with certain professors of the faith, who entertained suspicions of the genuineness of her conversion, on account of the uninterrupted peace and joy experienced by her in believing. In the manner in which she expresses herself on the subject, there is a beautiful mixture of humble self-distrust and tranquil confidence. 'Now that the Lord has in mercy opened my eyes, why should I continue to doubt? Did I not feel that in myself I am vile, I could have no hope through Christ. But, since he has graciously said he came to save that which was lost, why should I think he will reject a soul that evidently aspires after him?' 'It grieves me when any of the flock of Christ look on me with distrust, because my language is too triumphant: yet out of the abundance of my heart, my mouth must

speak.' 'If doubts respecting my personal interest in Christ are necessary, I beg you will have the goodness to tell me so, that I may pray to my heavenly Father for them, who has hitherto bestowed upon me a large supply of those spiritual blessings, which the intercession of our great Advocate has procured for guilty man.' It is very true that, as we advance in the divine life, our self-knowledge increasing along with our sensibility to the evil of sin, we shall feel more and more cause for self-distrust and self-abhorrence. But, if our progress be of the right kind, we must also proportionally grow in the knowledge of Christ, and in the steadfast faith of the divine dignity of his person, the perfection of his righteousness, the preciousness of his blood, the prevalence of his intercession, the faithfulness of his promises, the fulness and freeness of the grace of his Spirit: so that, while the one description of knowledge abases, the other should sustain, and comfort, and gladden us.

"True religion rectifies, but never disorders; enlightens, but never darkens; cheers, but never saddens, the soul. It can no more be chargeable with melancholy than the sun with darkness. It is to the soul what the sun is to the visible creation—the source of light, and life, and purity, and joy. It has many a time been found the most effectual antidote and cure for melancholy; never its real cause."

The Christian's conflict with doubt.

We now proceed to speak of the Christian's conflict with doubt. The line which separates the infidel from the believer is strongly marked; but the spirit of doubt passes over it, and sometimes harasses the

minds even of men of strong faith. It pursues not so much those who have been turned from infidelity, as others who have never been sceptics, and whose hearts recoil from the idea of "departing from the living God." The form which it assumes is various, deriving its hue, like the chameleon, from surrounding objects, or finding a weapon of torment in the mental constitution of those whom it assails. Sometimes it relates to a single point of Christian doctrine, sometimes to the whole Christian scheme, and sometimes to the very foundations and essence of natural religion itself. Sometimes it is a mere spirit of mischief, sent, one may safely conclude, from hell, to haunt and distress those whom it cannot move away from their loyalty to the Saviour and their zeal for his glory.

Robert Hall; born at Arnsby, May 2, 1764; died at Bristol, Feb. 21, 1831.

The high position of ROBERT HALL, as a "defender of the faith," and an expounder of its highest verities, is well known. Brought up under the care of a father of eminent piety and wisdom, he *seemed* at least to give evidence of conversion to God in the fifteenth year of his age. But, through metaphysical study and a speculative habit of mind, he was for many years, after entering the ministry, entangled with doubt and error on points of considerable importance. The brilliancy and force of his eloquence were universally acknowledged, but some of his warmest and wisest friends feared whither he was tending. "I am a firm believer," he said, when called to explain his sentiments, "in the proper Divinity of Jesus Christ; in the merits of Christ as the sole ground of acceptance in the sight of God, without admitting works to have any

share in the great business of justification ; and in the necessity of divine influence to regenerate and sanctify the mind of every man, in order to his becoming a real Christian." But, at the same time, he added, "I am, and have been for a long time, a materialist, though I have never drawn your attention to this subject in my preaching, because I have always considered it myself, and wished you to consider it, as *a mere metaphysical speculation.* My opinion, however, upon this head is, that the nature of man is simple and uniform ; that the thinking powers and faculties are the result of a certain organization of matter ; and that after death he ceases to be conscious *until the resurrection.*"

The manner of his deliverance from this error is very instructive. It was through the heart rather than through the head. By the death of his father, in 1791, his mind was carried back to the state of serious thought with which he entered upon the pastoral office. Meditating, with the deepest veneration, upon the unusual excellences of a parent now for ever lost to him, he was led to investigate, with renewed earnestness, the truth as well as value of those high and sacred principles, from which his eminent piety and admirable consistency so evidently flowed. He called to mind, too, several occasions on which his father, partly by the force of reason, partly by that of tender expostulation, had exhorted him to abandon the vague and dangerous speculations to which he was prone. The result was his renunciation of materialism, which he often declared to be "buried in his father's grave."

The first pastoral charge which Mr. Hall held was over a church at Cambridge, whose former minister had

passed, by a rather rapid transition, from the profession of orthodox opinions to the very borders of infidelity. The state of the church itself was, as might be expected, very unsatisfactory. It had become so deteriorated, that among the more intelligent classes, with a few exceptions, "he was esteemed the best Christian who was most skilled in disputation." Thinking themselves liberal and unshackled, they could not but congratulate one another that their new pastor, a man of splendid talents, was *almost* as liberal and unshackled as themselves. But he entered on his new duties with earnest desires that he might be able "to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Feeling that to him was consigned the charge of transforming, with God's assistance, a cold and sterile soil into a fruitful field, he determined not to satisfy himself with half measures, but proceeded to expose error, and defend what he regarded as essential truth. The first sermon, therefore, which he delivered at Cambridge, after he had assumed the office of pastor, was on the doctrine of the atonement, and its practical tendencies. Immediately after the conclusion of the service, one of the congregation, who had followed poor Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went into the vestry and said:—"Mr. Hall, this preaching won't do for us: it will only suit a congregation of old women." "Do you mean my sermon, sir, or the doctrine?" "Your *doctrine.*" "Why is it that the *doctrine* is fit only for old women?" "Because it may suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort." "Thank you, sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not *suit* people of *any* age, unless it be true; and if it *be true,* it is not fitted for

old women alone, but is equally important at any age."

Early in the year 1799, a severe fever, which brought him, in his own apprehension and that of his friends, to the brink of the grave, gave him an opportunity of experiencing the support yielded by the doctrines of the cross "in the near view of death and judgment." He "never before felt his mind so calm and happy." The impression was not only salutary, but abiding; and it again prompted him to the investigation of one or two points, with regard to which he had long felt himself floating in uncertainty. Thus, although he had for some years steadily and earnestly enforced the necessity of divine influence in the transformation of character, and in perseverance in a course of consistent, holy obedience, yet he spoke of it as "the influence of the Spirit of God," and never in express terms, as "the influence of the Holy Spirit." The reason was, that though he fully believed the necessity of spiritual agency in commencing and continuing the spiritual life, he doubted the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit." But about this time he was struck with the fact, that whenever, in private prayer, he was in the most deeply devotional frame, "most overwhelmed with the sense that he was nothing, and God was all in all," he always felt himself inclined to adopt a Trinitarian doxology. This circumstance occurring frequently, and more frequently meditated upon in a tone of honest and anxious inquiry, issued at length in a persuasion that the Holy Spirit is really and truly God, and not an emanation. It was not, however, until 1800 that he publicly included the personality of the Holy Spirit in his statements of the doctrine of spiritual influence.

In November, 1804, the noble mind of Robert Hall, long over-wrought by abstract studies, and injured by the severity of intense bodily suffering, lost its balance; and he who had so long been the object of universal admiration now became the subject of as extensive a sympathy. In April, 1805, he was able to resume his ministerial functions; but in about twelve months he was again laid aside from public duty by a recurrence of the same malady. He soon, however, regained the balance of his mental powers, but deemed it his duty, for the sake of entire relaxation, to resign his pastoral charge. And thus terminated a connection which had subsisted for fifteen years, and had been of great benefit to Mr. Hall's character, while, by the divine blessing upon his labours, it had transformed a society that was rapidly sinking under the influence of cold or disputatious speculators, into a flourishing church and congregation," bringing forth the fruits of righteousness," and shining in the lustre of a consistent Christian profession.

These two visitations of so humiliating a calamity deeply affected Mr. Hall's mind. And it was his persuasion, that however vivid his convictions of religious truth, and of the necessity of a consistent course of evangelical obedience, had formerly been, and however correct his doctrinal sentiments during the last four or five years, yet that he did not undergo a thorough transformation of character, a complete renewal of his heart and affections, until the first of these seizures. In this he may have been mistaken; but there can be no question that from this period he seemed to live more under the prevailing recollection of his entire dependence upon God, that his habits were more devotional than they had ever before been, and

his spiritual exercises more fervent and more elevated.

The Rev. JAMES HARRINGTON EVANS may be cited as an instructive instance of conflict between a Christian heart and speculative doubts on an important question in theology. Mr. Evans had preached Christ for years, and with success before he fell into those errors which, for a time, greatly marred both his happiness and his usefulness. He had received the doctrine of the Trinity, together with the other truths of the Bible; but he had little knowledge of those questions which have engaged the attention of theologians, and little of that mental discipline which would qualify him to exercise a sound judgment on novelties which might be presented to his mind. In these circumstances, the idea that Jesus the Man was God only by the indwelling of the Father seemed to him to remove or reduce the difficulty which, "without controversy," is involved in the mystery of a Triune God, and was embraced and published by him. Because he felt that God alone could convince, convert, and sanctify the sinner; and because he looked to the Father, through Christ, to begin, to carry on, and finish the work, he did not even suspect that the Holy Spirit could be in the slightest degree dishonoured by him; and in the midst of a plain avowal that Emmanuel was not God—that is, in any real or proper sense—he persuaded himself that he considered him to be God over all, and, however inconsistent it may appear, in his heart worshipped him as such.

James H. Evans; born April 15, 1785; died Dec. 1, 1849.

His complacency and satisfaction, however, were soon disturbed by the alarm which was excited among his friends by the doctrines which he had given to the

world. He found himself broadly charged with a system which viewed the Saviour as God indeed by name, but as a mere man by nature, and with entire denial of the real glory of the Holy Ghost in the economy of redemption. This charge appeared to him of so awful a nature, that it made the deepest impression on his mind, and the conviction soon became established, that if such were really his system, it could not be a true one. He was thus led seriously and prayerfully to review his scheme altogether; and that not hastily but with much caution and deliberation, and amid great distress of mind. By day and night he was occupied with the subject. He would rise at three in the morning for study and prayer, earnestly and honestly seeking, not to establish a system, but to know and believe the truth.

While thus engaged in the investigation, a valued friend sent him Dr. Wardlaw's "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy." Many of the arguments of this book were very convincing to him; but as the work, being intended for Socinians, did not entirely meet his case, it failed to give him full satisfaction, and he wrote to Dr. Wardlaw a letter, in which he said, "I have no sort of conception that our Lord was a mere man, and I therefore rejoice to see how triumphantly you have overturned that hypothesis. On the other hand, I confess that my soul desires a more perfect satisfaction that the Redeemer was, *in every respect* and *in all respects*, as truly God as was the Father. Herein I desire your prayers and your advice. I feel in my very soul the deepest anguish and horror at the idea of thinking aught or speaking aught against the real glory of my most blessed Lord, to whose blood I look for righteousness, and to whose Spirit I look for sanctification, who is my all in salva-

tion. . . . If I am in any degree acquainted with the state of my own soul, it is this :—I really desire to receive in meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save my soul. I conceive that the nature of God is really so far above the comprehension of reason, that, whatever be the revelation of God in the word, it can never be *irrational.* This stumbling-block, blessed be God, is not in my way. I read my Bible, therefore, with eternity before me, and praying for the spirit of a little child."

In his reply, Dr. Wardlaw stated, with great clearness, the evidence of the proper Godhead of the Son as distinguished from the Father. As to whether "the Redeemer," to use Mr. Evans's words, was "in every respect as truly God as the Father," his correspondent said, "I think it ought at once to strike you, that there can be but *one kind of Deity.* That which constitutes Deity in the Father must be that which constitutes Deity in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Divided and dependent Deity is a contradiction. If Jesus Christ be God, he must be God equal with the Father, else he would not be truly God at all. There can be no superior and inferior description of Deity; and men have imposed upon themselves by words without distinct ideas, when they have used any such terms, and fancied they understood them. The sole inferiority of the blessed Jesus arose from his voluntarily assumed capacity of a *servant,* when he graciously took our nature upon him to accomplish its redemption."

The investigation, conducted in a spirit so teachable and devout, issued, as might be expected, in the conviction that the Son and the Holy Spirit are, with the Father, truly, properly, personally, God. From

his pulpit and by the press he openly and solemnly stated the change which had taken place in his views. He bought up all the copies of the book that could be found which contained the errors he now renounced, and committed them to the flames, often with expressions of the deepest loathing and penitence before God. And in the remembrance of his fearful mistake he "walked softly all his years, now rendered lowly and self-distrustful, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth."

"It cannot be matter of surprise," says his biographer, "that during the time when these serious errors formed a part of Mr. Evans's creed, there should be much evil effect on his own soul; such he afterwards acknowledged to have been the case; and there was also a most manifest withering in his ministry. The work of conversion was entirely at a stand. He subsequently asserted that he did not know of one instance of it while he was preaching these doctrines; neither could it be expected that believers should go to be fed where poison was administered. A mere handful only of people composed at this time the congregation at John-street Chapel, while, immediately upon his restoration, the hand of the Lord was manifestly with him: conversions were numerous, and there was an evident power in the word to the souls of God's people."

Robert Alfred Vaughan; born 1823; died 1857.

Robert Alfred Vaughan consecrated himself to the Christian ministry in early life, and the spirit in which he did so is disclosed by his private journal:—"April 3rd, 1843. My object must be to look on myself as *called* by my Redeemer to set myself apart for his ministry,

looking up to him, my only hope; to pray that I may do his will concerning me. How can I be disobedient to the will of such a Master? One day I shall be with him alone—I shall be casting myself on his righteousness as all my hope; let me then now unite my heart to fear his name by the help of the promised Spirit. I should not have been satisfied that I was doing right if I had been anything but what I am about to become. And is not that a call? Could I but look up to him with constancy as the Redeemer who is indeed my salvation, and to whom I ought to devote every capability—what success will be produced by the concentration—what good with the success—what joy with the good! The fruits of this decision would probably surpass all I have dared to hope. O God, grant it me, grant it me."

In this spirit the young Christian devoted himself to preparatory studies, under his father's care, in the Lancashire Independent College, for three years. His religious feeling was deep and strong. In some seasons, we are told, it was of a happy description, full of hope and of Christian aspiration. In others, his upbraidings of himself, as now revealed by his diary, were severe, and must have been attended with much pain. "But the die is cast," he wrote in lines which he expected no eye to see. "Nothing now shall turn me back. My Saviour not casting me out, what shall stay me?" And again—"Thanks to God for more lively faith, a more earnest spirit of prayer, a deeper joy in religion, more self-renunciation. A thousand impure thoughts chased away; affection turned to a true, noble, pure channel; joy from the highest source above, from the best on earth, poured in on me on every side. Oh! what shall I render to the Lord?

Let me be thine; teach me still more; shine on me still more brightly. Let me never again go so far from thee as I have gone, but keep me with thine embrace now and ever."

On the completion of his course of study at the Lancashire College, Mr. Vaughan proceeded to spend a year at a German university. His thoughtful piety, his fixed reverence for the authority of the sacred Scriptures, and that caution and ripeness of judgment which thus early characterized him, seemed to his father quite enough to show that such a course might be taken without danger. He had already attracted attention by the power of his pen, and it was one of the ambitions of his life to use that pen in the defence of the gospel and of the word of God. And it was judged that the more thoroughly he understood the theological questions which had been so much agitated in Germany, the better prepared should he be for the great contest between truth and error. Nor were the expectations which his father and friends cherished ultimately disappointed. But in the meantime he had to pass through a dark cloud. "During his German residence, he sank," to use the words of one who seems to have known him, "to the nadir of his spiritual sphere, and seemed to voyage through the 'darksome desert of chaos and ancient night.'" He applied himself then, for the first time, to the fundamental inquiries of metaphysics, and when introduced to the daring absurdities and contradictions of German philosophy he was bewildered :—

> "A universal hubbub wild,
> Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
> Borne through the hollow dark, assault his ear
> With loudest vehemence."

"His mind," to use his father's words, "fell under the

influence of a vague spiritual restlessness, discontent, and gloom. It resembled, in some respects, the experiences through which he had passed in Lancashire, but it was in other respects different. It came from larger views of the mystery of our existence, and embraced many more sources of misgiving and sorrow." "To live," he wrote himself, while in this state of mind, to the only friend to whom he unbosomed himself—"To live is, to me, like being led blindfold through the streets of a great city—a confusion of sounds, the bustle of feet, and the rolling of vehicles—a sensation that some parts are lighter and others darker, that in some places the pavement is less smooth, in others more so—the crying and the laughing of children on either side, and the hum of the traffickers—the buyers and sellers of vanities—and that is all. It is of no avail to ask where we are. The conductor is a mute. We can only wait till the bandage shall be taken off our eyes: that will be when we can go no further. Then will the opened eyes be dazzled in a palace, or horror-struck by the sights that shall meet them in the eternal lazar-house—the hospital of sick souls for ever cureless."

One month later he would write in these terms: "The exhilaration of entering on a new space of time, with reinvigorated hopes, and efforts wherewith to fill it, has banished not a few gloomy thoughts: they are left behind, and I see them no more. The wonderful profusion of mercies which were daily granted me during the year that is gone, though they increase the sense of my undeserving, speak of a providential goodness that wakes up my thoughts to love and to gratitude. It is well to know ourselves, but such knowledge too exclusively is not good. If any would meditate

more on himself, let him also meditate more on Christ, or the sight of the plagues of his own heart will rob him of all hope and consolation. So I have found it, to my sorrow. We believe it; but experience alone can stamp the lesson deeply, that love to Christ is knowledge, and gratitude to him, wisdom; and that at the foot of the cross alone can we with safety reflect upon ourselves. Reasoning may make us believe, but the sense of guilt causes us to *feel* that Christ must be Divine." And again: "I cannot be sufficiently thankful that I feel, at the commencement of this year, so differently from what I did at the close of the last. Of the despondency that then, as with a sort of supernatural power, overcame me, I now feel nothing; and my spirits—though, while in absence from you, it is impossible they should be elated—are yet, in comparison, tranquil. The quiet, even progress of the days in regular study seems to have its correspondence in my own mind; and the contrast and conflict between the outer and inner life no more agitates me. The faith which was overshadowed can once more behold her heaven; and the feeling of contentment—that much-prized blessing—does not disdain to visit me."

"Reader," says Mr. Vaughan's father, "hast thou never known anything of the self-contradiction, the processes of self-torture, in which spirits become skilled which descend into these depths of spiritual life—or, rather, spiritual death? It is not certain that exemption from such dark hours should be accounted a matter for congratulation. Many, we doubt not, ascend to heaven without ever descending into regions which seem to be so far away from it. But such souls do not go to the highest heaven; nor will they ever be able to show others the road thither. The men who find,

beyond others, their all in God, are the men who have known, beyond others, what it is to be without him—to feel after him, and not to find him. Certain it is, that the fearful ordeal through which this young Christian passed enabled him the better to understand the distraction and agony of some of the mystics whose erratic experience and faith he was thus prepared to explain,* and qualified him to deal with doubt and doubters as probably he could not have otherwise done. Trial in this form never returned, but the benefits which accrued from it were never lost. "I think I see now," he said, "the past has been a stage further of self-building. I am anxious to be, not what I wish to be, but what Christ would wish me to be. To labour for ourselves is a sorry task—to labour for *him*, the highest happiness." And it was his happiness to labour for him with uninterrupted constancy to the end of his brief career; and in no form was his labour more valuable than in the defence of Christ's truth. That the boasted philosophy of Germany is "false and worthless" was his deep conviction. Like his namesake, who entered the camp of the Danes in the disguise of a minstrel, he examined its hostile position for himself, and was able the more effectually to combat them afterwards; and the truths which he preached with his lips, and which he defended with his pen, were his strength and joy when he saw an early grave opening to receive him. "To have dying well *over*," he said—*behind* me, not *before*, and life's trial ended happily—would be bliss indeed. But let me not doubt the Son of God. Is death worse in real danger than thirty years of life? Surely not. Have I not been marvellously *kept?* Then I can launch out, I hope,

*In his book, "Hours with the Mystics."

trustfully. Oh! forsake not the work of thine own hands. At least, let me live as if living only for each single day as God gives it. My lot at this moment abounds in mercy. Hear my cry, O Lord; may I be ready when thou comest. This is my duty—the plain duty of my position—not to be afraid. I cannot proclaim Christ, cannot actively serve him; but I am bound to glorify him by rising above the fear of death. Is not cowardice treason? Fear not then death, saith my Lord. Great words. The power of death is broken. Captivity is captive. May Christ set me free from that disgraceful bondage—fear of death. Thy will be done."

The spirit of doubt assails some men, we have remarked, as a spirit of mischief, sent direct from hell to harass and annoy them. Of this order was the experience of John Bunyan. "Sometimes, when I have been preaching," he says, "I have been violently assaulted with thoughts of blasphemy, and strongly tempted to speak the words with my mouth before the congregation. I have also, at some times, even when I have begun to speak the word with such clearness, evidence, and liberty of speech, yet been, before the ending of that opportunity, so blinded, and so estranged from the things I have been speaking, and have also been so straitened in my speech, as to utterance before the people, that I have been as if I had not known or remembered what I have been about, or as if my head had been in a bag all the time of my exercise." Again he tells us how that "whole floods of blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, were poured in upon his spirit, to his great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous

thoughts stirred up questions in him against the very being of God, and of his only beloved Son: as whether there were, in truth, a God or Christ, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story, than the holy and pure word of God." Even his Pilgrim, whose experience was intended to represent that of ordinary Christians, and to whose fidelity in its grand outlines and general character, every evangelical Christian can testify, did not reach the celestial city without encountering atheistical doubts on his way thither. And the first remark which he makes in the "Conclusion" of his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" is as follows:—"Of all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being of God, and truth of his Gospel, is the worst, and the worst to be borne. When this temptation comes it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundation from under me. Oh, I have often thought of that word, 'Have your loins girt about with truth;' and of that, 'When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?'"

The experience of Dr. Payson was in this, as in many other respects, like that of John Bunyan. "It seems to me," he wrote to his mother after being many years in the ministry, "that those who die young, like Brainerd and Martyn, know almost nothing of the difficulty of persevering in the Christian race. My difficulties increase every year. There is one trial which you cannot know experimentally. It is that of being obliged to preach to others, when one doubts of everything, and can scarcely believe that there is a God. All the atheistical, deistical, and heretical

objections, which I meet with in books, are childish babblings compared with those which Satan suggests, and which he urges upon the mind with a force which seems irresistible. Yet I am often obliged to write sermons, and to preach, when these objections beat upon me like a whirlwind, and almost distract me. When he asks as he continually does ask, 'What have you gained by all your prayers?' I know not what to reply. However, pray I must, and, God assisting me, pray I will. The way is, indeed, difficult, but I can devise no other which is not more so. There is no one to whom I can go, if I forsake Christ."

What, then, shall we say to these things? Were Bunyan and Payson hypocrites, who preached what they did not believe, or what they had discovered reason to doubt? Very far from it. One of them suffered twelve years' imprisonment for what he preached, and both of them were prepared to lay down their lives in its defence. They were not as men who, in examining the foundations on which they had built, discovered some flaw or fatal defect; for every succeeding examination only strengthened their convictions of the truth of divine revelation. They were rather as men persecuted by Satan "for righteousness' sake." "No reasonable man can adduce Dr. Payson's temptations," says his biographer, "to discredit religion, for they are vanquished temptations: he overcame them all." And he overcame them not by shutting his eyes, but by giving due weight to the evidences of religion, and keeping his heart with all diligence. In one of his last sermons, on Psalm xviii. 30, "The word of the Lord is tried," he described the trials to which the word of the Lord had been subjected by its enemies, and the tests of a

different character which it has sustained from its friends. And "never scarcely were the mightiest infidels made to appear so puny, insignificant, and foolish. He who sitteth in the heavens could almost be seen 'deriding them.' When describing the manner in which Christians had *tried* it, 'he spoke out of the abundance of his heart.' Experience aided his eloquence, and added strength to the conviction which it wrought." Some months after, when on the bed of death, he said to members of his congregation who visited him, "It has often been remarked, that people who have been into the other world cannot come back to tell us what they have seen; but I am so near the eternal world, that I can see almost as clearly as if I were there; and I see enough to satisfy myself, at least, of the truth of the doctrines which I have preached. I do not know that I should feel at all surer had I been really there."

The experience of Professor Halyburton in this matter is very instructive. Under date February 24, 1706, he writes: "In the morning I was sore shaken about the truths of God, but came to peace as to what I was to speak in three things—(1.) Lord, thou hast fully satisfied me as to the utter vanity and unsatisfactoriness of all other courses for satisfaction, as to our great concerns, besides that revealed in the gospel. (2.) Lord, thou hast fully satisfied me, that, supposing the truth of the gospel, there is a plenary and full security as to all that I can desire, with respect to time and eternity, in it. (3.) Lord, thou hast given me that full and rational evidence for the truth of the gospel, far beyond what would in other things fully satisfy me; and

therefore it must only be the wretched unbelief of my heart that keeps me hesitating here. I will look for faith to the Author of it. Of these I am so fixed, that no power of temptation has been able to shake me. All my doubtings flow from the power of unbelief, that will not be suppressed without an overpowering sense of divine authority. I preached, and was helped in public worship, being strengthened in body, and sweetened in spirit."

"Ministers," said Professor Halyburton, as the result of his own observation, "for the most part are more shaken about the truths of religion, and the foundations, than about their own state; people, more about their state, than about the truths of religion." There is perhaps more than one reason for the difference. Ministers in the constant study of divine things are in danger of forgetting the limits of their own powers, and of urging their thoughts onward into the darkness of mysteries which only infinite powers can fathom; and bewilderment is the natural consequence. Dædalus and Icarus—so runs the ancient fable—made themselves wings; but Icarus having flown too high, the heat of the sun melted the wax by which his wings were attached to his body, and he fell into the sea and was drowned. So will it be with those who attempt to rise higher than their powers are capable of bearing them in the contemplation of things spiritual and divine. So minds are constitutionally eager to penetrate into things unknown, and suffer the bitter fruits of their presumption in the doubts and uncertainties which arise from the impotence of their endeavours. Other minds, deeply alive to the awfulness of the questions

which engage so much of their thought, and sensitive to the very possibilities of error, often struggle after a kind and degree of evidence which the very nature of the object does not admit of: they would live by sight and not by faith. And it is not to be wondered if these are haunted by doubts which, even in their own better-instructed judgment, are groundless.

These *natural* causes, however, do not perhaps sufficiently explain the fact observed by Professor Halyburton. Those who believe holy Scripture will not find it hard to suppose that Satan has a direct agency in such doubts as those of Bunyan and Payson. We do not undertake to define the manner and degree of his agency. But if he found the means of access to the pure mind of the Son of God, and dared to insinuate doubt into his thoughts—"*If* thou be the Son of God"—we need not marvel that he should assail with doubt the feebler minds and less-informed thoughts of Christ's followers. It is difficult to account, on any other supposition, for the experience of some Christians. They have studied the evidences of religion fully, and have attained the strongest convictions of its truth. Their hearts are interested, with their understanding, in the faith of Christ, and have found rest and satisfaction in the Atonement, and in him who offered it. But in a way they know not, and from a source which they cannot trace, thoughts arise utterly subversive of their strongest convictions, and fatal to their most cherished hopes. They sometimes repel these thoughts with a strong will, and sometimes grapple with them by a thorough reconsideration of the grounds on which their belief rests. Every review of those many lines of argument, historical and moral, which converge on one

conclusion, the reality and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which seem to stand around it as a guard of strong and armed men, ends not in shaking but in strengthening their Christian convictions. But what avails it? The review is no sooner completed than the old thought presents itself, and, in defiance of will and reason, disturbs and distresses the soul. Whence that thought, if not from some of those ministers of "the prince of the power of the air," whose only pleasure it is to annoy the servants of the Most High, and, if possible, turn them away from God? The assailant doubt may take shape from prevalent forms of scepticism, or may adapt itself to the constitutional weakness or tendency of the person assailed. But in fixing itself in spite of reason, as it does, in the soul, and, like a poisoned dart, diffusing fever around it, while conviction, though rationally unmoved, is not sufficient to neutralize or prevent it, we do not hesitate to look upon it as a weapon in the hands of the arch-enemy.

And what do doubts of this order, doubts the most distressing because the least amenable to reason, prove? "Not that the Scriptures are false, and religion a delusion, but that these can survive, and shine the brighter, and stand the firmer, notwithstanding the most malignant and desperate assaults of their most powerful foes."

Such trials of faith answer many valuable ends. "The champion of the cross who is destined to make wide encroachments on the kingdom of Satan, must not be 'ignorant of his devices.' He must see and know the enemies to be resisted, in order to wield his spiritual weapons with skill and effect. When Luther took the 'cowl and tonsure,' he little knew

for what purpose; and human foresight would never have predicted the consequences which grew out of his seclusion. But it was in a monastery that he acquired that knowledge and experience which fitted him for the peculiar part which he was subsequently to act in demolishing monastic institutions, and in kindling and spreading the light of the glorious Reformation."

It would be a great mistake, however, to imagine that doubts of the nature we have been considering are necessary parts of religion, or are even among the healthy operations of piety. Far otherwise. It should be our daily prayer to be kept from such temptations. "As a defence against them we should 'trust in God at all times,' and pour out our hearts before him. We should strive to banish such suggestions from the mind when they enter it, and to hold up the shield of faith as a defence against the fiery darts of the devil, when we see them approaching."

In our endeavours to know God, God has himself provided two resting-places for the intellect and the heart—by revealing himself as a Father, and by revealing himself in "the man Christ Jesus."

The story of the king who asked the philosopher, What is God? is well-known. "Give me a day to think of it," was the reply. But when the day was ended, "Give me another day," was the philosopher's request. The day was granted, and then another was required. Until the philosopher confessed, that the longer he thought of the question, the more difficult he found the answer. In this little tale we have wrapped up, as it were in a parable, the history of all men's attempts "to find out God."

The Bible tells us, in one simple utterance, all that can be known of the nature of God, when it says, "God is a Spirit;" and when to this Spirit it ascribes self-existing life, intelligence, power, holiness, and love. When we receive these truths, we feel ourselves at once raised above, and placed immeasurably in advance of, all that men by their own reasonings have ever attained. And yet we do not feel that our intellect has found a resting-place. We are conscious of being kept perpetually on the stretch—mentally struggling to comprehend the incomprehensible, or at least to bring within the range of our mind's vision more and more of that outlying and far-reaching infinitude which belongs to every attribute of the Eternal Spirit. It is the truth we hold; but we feel we can never reach the whole truth. And, in our natural ambition to acquire more, we are restless in the possession of what we have already acquired. But feeling how little we can understand of the saying, "God is a Spirit," we feel how much and how thoroughly we can understand the saying, "God is our Father." It is not the sort of knowledge that many minds crave after, but it is just that knowledge in which the mind, jaded, worn out, sickened by its attempts after another kind of knowledge, at last finds rest. Humiliated by its failures to comprehend God, and chastened into a proper estimate of its own powers, it finds rest at last with peaceful, if not joyful, satisfaction, in the conclusion, "God is my Father."

This doctrine is a resting-place for the heart likewise. We are not alone in this world. We feel that we cannot be alone. We are not made for it. We send out our affections all around, like the feelers of

certain animals, to find objects to which they may attach themselves, on which they may rest, and from which they may draw a life of peace and enjoyment. But we make the most grievous mistakes, and receive the recompense of our errors in bitter disappointment and sorrow. God has provided for our affections many objects to which they may adhere with more or less of tenacity, and from which they may derive more or less of satisfaction; and these his gifts are not to be cynically scorned, but gratefully accepted. But he has so ordered it, that only in himself may the human heart find a resting-place. And not only so, but it is only in certain aspects of his character, and in certain relationships in which he stands to us, that we can find our rest. As an object of affection, devout, unlimited, supreme, we can imagine nothing more fit or excellent than God, contemplated simply in the moral grandeur and beauty of his character. But yet, acquaint ourselves as we may with the noblest and loveliest attributes of God, think of them, not as abstractions, but as cohering in him, the Greatest, the Best, we still feel that, glorious as is the image on which we are gazing, and prepared as we are to fall down and worship it, there lacketh something—something that shall have an endearing and uniting influence, something that shall make it our heart's resting-place. And we feel that this is provided for us when we are told, "That great and good One, on whom your eye is gazing with such rapt admiration, and to which your heart goes forth adoringly, is your Father in heaven." The words open a new fountain in our hearts. We stand no longer at a distance wonderingly, but rush to his feet; and while we bathe them with the tears of

affect n and joy, we exclaim, "This is my rest for ever."

A few years ago a young Brahmin became a Christian, and openly professed his faith in the Saviour of the world. By the operation of an unjust law, and by the fanaticism of his Hindu relations, he was deprived of his property, separated from his wife and children, and cast on the tender mercies of a cold and cruel world. Loathed as a leper by those who were dearest to his heart, and hated as a fiend by those whom he most loved, the question was put to him, "What have you gained by becoming a Christian?" "Much," he replied,—"much; I have learned to say 'Our Father.'" The Christian Brahmin did not mean that he could now repeat the Lord's Prayer. That, in itself, done idly or superstitiously, would be as valueless and comfortless to his soul as the repetition of a Hindu prayer. But he had acquired a knowledge of the one true God as *his Father;* and by this the troubled sea of his heart was quieted, the earnest craving of his soul was satisfied; and with a Father in heaven who loved him and cared for him, he could endure to be an outcast for Christ's sake.

In our endeavours to know God, the intellect and the heart find another resting-place in the manifestation of God in Christ Jesus. "Omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, being without form or place, existence without beginning or end, eternal rest without change or emotion—these in their very sublimity constitute a notion which tends to repel rather than to attract, to overwhelm and crush rather than gently to raise and foster our human sympathies and desires. Our mortal feebleness shrinks from it in trembling

awe. We cannot make a home of this cold magnificence; we cannot take immensity by the hand. The soul, lost in such contemplations, like a trembling child wandering on some mountain solitude, longs, amidst all this vastness and grandeur, for the sound of some familiar voice to break the stillness, or the sight of some sheltered spot in which it may nestle with the sense of friendliness and security.

"Now, that which is thus the deep-felt want of our nature is most fully and adequately met in the person of Jesus Christ. For here is One whom, while we may reverence and adore as God, we can think of as clearly, and love as simply, trustingly, tenderly, as the best-known and loved of our earthly friends. Here is a point around which our shadowy conceptions may condense, a focus towards which our aimless aspirations may tend. Here we have set before us the Boundless limited in form, the Eternal dwelling in time, the invisible and spiritual God revealed in that Word of life which human eyes have seen, and human hands have handled. No longer, when we read, or muse, or pray, need our minds be at a loss, our thoughts wander forth through eternity in search of a living God. To him who lived among us, breathed our common air and spoke our human speech, loved us with a human heart, and healed and helped us with human hands, to him, as God, every knee may bow, and every tongue confess. No longer, in our hidden joys and griefs, in our gratitude and our contrition, in our love and in our sorrow, when our full hearts long for a heavenly confidant, to whom, as to no earthly friend, we may lay bare our souls, need we feel as if God were too awful a Being to obtrude upon him our insignificance, or to offer to

him our tenderness or our tears. 'Come unto me,' is the invitation of this blessed One, so intensely human, though so gloriously Divine,—'unto me,' in whose arms little children were embraced, on whose bosom a frail mortal lay,—'unto me,' who hungered, thirsted, fainted, sorrowed, wept, and yet whose love, and grief, and pains, and tears, were the expression of emotions felt in the mighty heart of God—'come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" *

"For my own part," said Dr. Arnold, "considering one great object of God's revealing himself in the person of Christ to be the furnishing us with an object of worship which we could at once love and understand; or, in other words, the supplying safely and wholesomely that want in human nature, which has shown itself in false religions, 'in making gods after our own devices,' it does seem to me to be forfeiting the peculiar benefits thus offered, if we persist in attempting to approach God in his own incomprehensible essence, which, as no man hath seen or can see, so no man can conceive it. . . . Unitarians have deceived themselves by fancying that they could understand the notion of one God any better than that of God in Christ; whereas it seems to me, that it is only of God in Christ that I can in my present state of being conceive anything at all."

True it is that, without controversy, the incarnation which thus provides a resting-place for our labouring thoughts and wearied hearts involves in it a great mystery. But it is a mystery which is often much misjudged. The point of view from which it ought to be regarded was well expressed by a poor negro

* Rev. John Caird: "Sermons."

woman. "How wonderful," said a missionary, "that the great God should condescend to become a man!" "Not at all wonderful," was the unconsciously sublime reply; "*it was only just like him.*"

James A. Thomson; born at Aberdeen, March 13, 1821; died 1841.

It was our privilege to hear the same thought on an affecting occasion from the lips of a dying young man, whose experience in relation to *doubt* was very instructive. Consecrated to the Saviour in early life, he was for a time spiritually injured by too devoted and exclusive a pursuit of "the *ignis fatuus* of learning." Referring to the commencement of his university studies, he wrote to me two years later (1838):—"I met with, eagerly read, and admired 'Combe's Constitution of Man.' This plausible and, in many respects, excellent book came in my way at a peculiarly dangerous time. I had been just studying, and at that time firmly believed, the science of phrenology, of which the author is so eminently an apostle; the book was at the height of its popularity with that party with which I then sympathized, and had been as plentifully abused by those against whom my anti-pathetical feelings ran as strongly; and above all, I had been taking my first lessons in philosophy, and learned its pride, not its humility. The influence of the book on my mind was mostly indirect. I was not sensible of the dangerous nature of some of its sentiments; I would have persuaded myself that its views were entirely consonant with Scripture, and that it contained the true interpretation of Scripture; so that it did not perceptibly alter my avowed religious opinions. It was the subtle spirit of thrice-diluted infidelity—

the volatile ether of modern Unitarianism—that permeated the whole soul, and corrupted the penetralia of the inner man,—this it was that did the mischief. It was long before this temptation ceased to exert its influence on me."

Laden with university honours, JAMES THOMSON "purposed in his heart" to preach Christ's gospel to the heathen of China, and the purpose was doubtless accepted of Him who inspired it. But it was the Lord's will that his young servant should glorify him on an early death-bed rather than in the field of labour. When lying on that death-bed, and speaking of the wonders of the incarnation and death of Emmanuel, I recited to him the conversation of an inexperienced young Christian with an aged and learned Unitarian. Walking together, on a beautiful summer day, on the banks of a Highland river, and surrounded with some of the sublimest scenery of Scotland, the man of years and learning suddenly paused, and, pointing to the glories around, said with a feeling of apparent devoutness:—"What are we? Worms creeping on the earth—less than nothing. Can you imagine that the God who lighted those skies, and clothed this earth with beauty, should become a man and die for us?" The youth, not shaken but yet unaccustomed to such questionings, replied, "We are not judges of what it befits the great God to condescend to do. Besides, low as we are in guilt and pollution and misery, our nature was originally high; it is spiritual, and was made in the image of God." My dying friend immediately raised himself on his couch, and, with an expression of intense ardour in his eyes, said with energy, "I would have taken him

up on his own grounds. Real greatness does not consider it degradation to stoop,—it condescends to the meanest; and the loftier our conceptions of Godhead, the readier shall we be to believe that he did that wondrous thing—take 'upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death.'"

"Sometimes the doubts which harass the minds of men may be dispersed by looking at them boldly, and shaking them to tatters with the manly arguments which such men as Butler have bequeathed to us; sometimes they may be the result of an immoral condition of mind and of permitted sin, and may chiefly require purity of life to cause them to vanish; sometimes they may indicate the need of active work to check an over-tendency to speculation, where demonstration is impossible, and where the mind is therefore led to prey upon itself; but sometimes also they may be of a kind which will yield most easily to the influence produced upon the thoughts by solemn worship." "Is it not true that sometimes the phantoms which haunt a man in a book disappear when he falls upon his knees? Are there not at least some idols which break to pieces when set up in the presence of the true God? And may not eyes, to which the vision of Christ's glory has been dimmed, be sometimes most speedily purged and restored by earnest application to Him, whose gracious will it is that his disciples should enjoy his presence, and should behold his glory? In fact, may not a mind which has been confused by speculation, and harassed by doubts, sometimes recover its tone by crying out to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

'O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace?'"

"Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the morn;
Not seldom evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

"The smoothest seas will sometimes prove
To the confiding bark untrue;
And if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

"Th' umbrageous oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

"But thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify.

"I bent before thy gracious throne,
And ask'd for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given—nor peace alone,
But faith, and hope, and ecstasy."

CHAPTER III.

CONFLICT WITH SUFFERING AND DEATH.

CONTENTS.—Jesus Christ a man of sorrows—Their variety and intenseness — Stoicism — Socrates—Lessons from Christ—Christ's religion a religion of joy—The proto-martyr Stephen —Paul as a sufferer—Common principles—The early church —Pliny the Younger—Patrick Hamilton—Madame Guyon—Martyrs in Madagascar—In India—The ordinary afflictions of life—Bereavements—Aaron, Eli, Job—Captain Allen Gardiner—Richard Williams—No man dieth to himself—The principle of Scripture Biography—Details of the death of Stephen and of Christ—Conflicts of Thomas Ward—Triumph of Dr. Payson—The one Foundation—Conclusion.

"Though He were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—HEBREWS v. 8, 9.

"The word 'tribulation' is derived from the Latin 'tribulum,'—that word signifying the thrashing instrument, or roller, by which the Romans separated the corn from the husks; and 'tribulatio' in its primary significance, was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of a higher truth; and sorrow, and distress, and adversity being the appointed means for the separating in men of their chaff from their wheat, of whatever in them was light, and trivial, and poor, from the solid and the true, therefore he called these sorrows and griefs 'tribulations,' thrashings, that is, of the inner spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner."

DEAN TRENCH.

"In the wide city's peopled towers,
On the vast ocean's plains,
Midst the deep woodland's loneliest bowers,
Alike the Almighty reigns.

"Then fear not, though the angry sky
A thousand darts should cast;
Why should we tremble e'en to die,
And be with *him* at last?"

MRS. HEMANS.

CONFLICT WITH SUFFERING AND DEATH.

Our great Exemplar did not shrink from the "fight of afflictions." He was of the house and lineage of David, according to the flesh; but the royal family had, long before his birth, been reduced to a condition of poverty and obscurity. The royal tree, whose mighty branches had spread from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, was cut down, and nothing but the stem of Jesse remained, and that buried and out of sight. And it was from this stem that the Lord Jesus sprang, the heir of a more glorious throne than that of his father David, but born in poverty and sorrow :—

> "Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
> Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall."

The stable and the manger were a strange home for the world's Creator. But the world grudged him even these, and would have given him nothing but a grave. Herod sought the child's life, which was saved only by flight into the land of the ancient enemy of Israel, "his own" receiving him more inhospitably than the stranger. When, on Herod's death, he was carried back, still a babe in his mother's arms, to the land of Judæa, there was still no safety for him there, and he became a sojourner in the meanest of the petty towns of Galilee. Thence he acquired a title which, by its singular force, repre-

sented the pith and purport of many an ancient prophecy.* Fitly was he called a Nazarene, of whom it had been said of old, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not;"† and who had described his own condition in prophecy thus:—"I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."‡ Yea, he may be called a Nazarene of the Nazarenes. Despised as was Nazareth by its neighbours, he was despised by Nazareth itself. And why? Not that his life was more toilsome, or his condition poorer, than that of many around him; but there was a something, an unearthly beauty, about him, which their hearts were too gross to understand; and because they could not understand it, they despised it.

And this introduces us to a life-long sorrow of the heart of Jesus,—that which arises from the want of common tastes and congenial habits. Let him turn to what class of the community he pleased, he could find nothing in sympathy with the most sacred thoughts and feelings of his own heart. Priest and people, ruler and subject, rich and poor, were alike earthly and sensual. But his heart was the very shrine of God,—full of thoughts and feelings that were divine and pure. So that by the very necessity of his character he was isolated from all around him. This must have been to him a perpetual sorrow. There are who, when isolated from their neighbours by uncongenial tastes, look down on them with contempt, and, in proud strength of soul, wrap their cloaks around them and find a miserable heaven in sullen misanthropy. But

* Matthew ii. 20—23. † Isaiah liii. 3. ‡ Psalm xxii. 6.

Jesus Christ was not one of these. He was the truest as well as the purest man that ever lived—the truest to all the original instincts and all the best sensibilities of our nature. And he could not live, a man among men, and find himself separated from them by the wide gulf of alien thoughts and sentiments, without deep and constant pain. How his heart yearned for the sympathy of his fellows we see in his words to his disciples in Gethsemane, when, though he most needed their sympathy, he might be supposed to be most independent of it—"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

This separation from men affected Christ in other ways as well. Their pollution filled him with loathing, and their guilt with compassion. If Lot's righteous soul, with all its imperfections, was vexed day by day with the words and practices of the wicked men of Sodom, how shall we estimate the grief of Christ's spotless soul in daily converse with the men of a place out of which even its neighbours could not imagine any good thing to come? The thirty years he spent there must have been one protracted crucifixion, endured in inward silence, but with inward anguish. And when he entered on his public ministry, he had still the same sorrow to bear. The Roman yoke was the least of the ills by which his country was oppressed. The yoke of Satan was more oppressive by far. The whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there was no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.* The Pharisee, and the Sadducee, and the Herodian, and the Zealot, and the Essene presented but different phases of the common malady, and

* Isaiah i. 5, 6.

different types of the vain endeavours which were made to heal it. And when Jesus would close the wound, and bind it up, and mollify it by a divine ointment which he had brought from heaven, and whose efficacy was certain, he met with nothing but opposition and scorn. Men would rather die of their disease than have Christ's hand to touch their souls.

Very soon after the commencement of his public ministry, he entered the synagogue of Nazareth, and, in the hearing of those who had witnessed his pure life from infancy, read these words of the book of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* And having read these words, he began to say unto them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Then followed words so gracious that the people wondered. But their unbelief rose above their wonder; and the strange issue of it was, that they were filled with wrath, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. And it was only by a miraculous power he was delivered from their hands.

We may take this one incident as a fair and faithful representative of the general treatment Christ met with in seeking to bless and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And how he felt in contemplating the doom which Israel was incurring, we know from his own words,—"O Jerusalem, Jeru-

*Luke iv. 18—21.

salem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." These words he uttered on two occasions;* and they were doubtless oftener in his heart than on his lips; the shape into which his thoughts moulded the burden of his inmost soul. When crossing the Mount of Olives on his way from Bethany to Jerusalem, on the first day of that sad but busy week which preceded his death, we are told that when he beheld the city, as he descended the slopes of Olivet, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."† In those tears there were mingled a divine displeasure towards the guilty, a divine loathing towards the depraved, and a divine compassion towards the miserable. Guilt, depravity, and misery, awakened each its corresponding emotion in the breast of Jesus; and hence the bitterness of the tears which he shed over the lost city.

The treatment to which Christ's moral separation from the people and holy work for their good sub-

* Matthew xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34. † Luke xix. 41—44.

jected him affected him in another way, of which we have fuller intimations in the prophetic Psalms than in the history itself. The manner in which "the contradiction of sinners" often expressed itself entered as iron into his human soul, as we see by the lamentations and cries of the sixty-ninth Psalm.

The common ills of life, as suffered by others, affected Christ's heart deeply. When the people followed him, we read how "he was moved with compassion towards them, and healed their sick;" * and in that inimitable story of Lazarus and his sisters, we find his very heart laid bare to us, full of sympathy and sorrow. "Lord, if thou hadst been here," said the two sisters, the one after the other, "my brother had not died." "When Jesus, therefore, saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!" † It was love that moved him, and love drew many tears from his eyes which no witness ever saw. The sorrows of others were a continual sorrow to him.

There was one of the ills of life which Christ had to endure personally—life-long poverty. We greatly mistake if we think that, because he could convert stones into bread, or multiply a few loaves into many, his poverty was only imaginary. It was most real, and was ever felt as a real ill. His heart and lips were too truthful to misguide men, and these lips said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." ‡ He could have ordered it otherwise, it is

* Matthew xiv. 14. † John xi. 32—36. ‡ Matthew viii. 20.

true. He had only to speak the word, and legions of angels would have ministered to him. But he did not speak the word. He, who was rich, for our sakes became poor. He wore the poor man's dress; he ate the poor man's food; and for years he had not even the poor man's home. All this was voluntary, but it was real. He needed not, but for his love to us, to subject himself to these privations. But he did subject himself to them; and he felt them as keenly and sensitively as we can do. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

But perhaps the chief of all his sorrows was the shadow of the cross which covered his path from the very beginning. In what has been called "the crape-covered mirror" of the fifty-third of Isaiah, the Saviour beheld the reflection of himself, and saw, long before they arrived, the days of his sorrow. When in early life he said, "I must be about my Father's business," he knew the altar to which his Father's will was leading him on. Again and again he referred to that altar. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." * The Son of man is come "to give his life a ransom for many." † "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" ‡ "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." § And when,

* John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32.
† Matthew xx. 28.
‡ Luke xii. 50.
§ Luke ix. 22.

eight days after the last of these sayings was uttered, Moses and Elias were sent from heaven to commune with him, the subject of which they talked, even in the hour of the glory of his transfiguration, was "his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." * Thus did the shadow of the cross fall on his path everywhere, and cover his soul with sadness.

When the time drew near, this shadow became darker and darker, until, in Gethsemane, it covered him with the blackness of death. Into a garden which was there, hallowed by former conflicts and prayers, "he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." † "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of

* Luke ix. 31. † Matthew xxvii. 36—46.

blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." *

The grand object of the Saviour's sufferings was to make atonement for the sins of men. But we are looking at them at present only in relation to the example which he has left us as a sufferer. And, thus considered, the conflict and triumph of Gethsemane are fraught with light and comfort. "If we look into the Saviour's heart, we shall see how a *yes* and a *no* are in conflict there, as he realizes the hour when his own extremest suffering and his people's extremest guilt shall be brought awfully near to each other." "The cup is bitter, and, in view of its bitterness, purely human feeling can never do otherwise than refuse or be unwilling to drink it. But he lets a little drop fall into the cup, which is sufficient to make its contents sweet, and that drop is, 'God wills it.' The very point of conflict is to make the Divine sweetness transfuse the human bitterness. And so when Christ says, 'Rise, let us be going,' the bitterness has been swallowed up by the sweetness." The decision cost our Lord a struggle. But in the struggle he sinned not. The adversary gained no advantage. The *no* with which his nature shrank from suffering was in itself as sinless as the *yes* with which he submitted himself to his Father's will. "As the rising sun, before which a morning storm lay gloomily piled, comes forth in majesty when the storm is over, and in cloudless glory 'flames in the forehead of the morning sky;' so the incarnate Sun of righteousness

* Luke xxii. 41—46.

rises in calm majesty from behind the clouds of sorrow which had surrounded him. Jesus comes forward from the interior of the garden, and advances into the presence of his betrayer and his judges." But his sufferings were not yet ended. Gethsemane only foreshadowed Calvary. And when Calvary is mentioned, the whole story of the cross pictures itself before the reader's mind. The purple robe, and the crown of thorns, and the mock sceptre, the cruel scourging and the heavy cross, the nails and the spear, and, above all, that mystery of sorrow which wrung his heart when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow." Nowhere else has any son of man bought at such a price a title to be called, "The man of sorrows."

Such being the sufferings of our great Exemplar, let us see how he bore them. We are struck at once by the absence of everything bordering on stoicism. The Stoics regarded the passions and affections as sinful defects and irregularities,—as so many deviations from right reason. "Sorrow, in their esteem, was a sin scarcely to be expiated; to pity, was a fault; to rejoice, an extravagance; and the apostle's advice, 'to be angry and sin not,' was a contradiction in their philosophy. To us let this be sufficient, that our Saviour Christ, who took upon him all our natural infirmities, but none of our sinful, has been seen to weep, to be sorrowful, to pity, and to be angry; which shows that there might be gall in a dove, passion without sin, and motion without disturbance."

Socrates was no professed Stoic, but before *his* death-struggle there was no Gethsemane. The difference between the illustrious Greek and the great

Saviour cannot be wholly explained without reference to the expiation which Christ was accomplishing by his death. Without such reference the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and the agonizing cry of Calvary, would reflect on his inward strength and manliness and faith. But the light-heartedness of Socrates is not to his honour even as a man. More of heart and feeling would have shown a truer man. "Do you ask," says Tholuck, "why *that* man whom no fainting of spirit, no bloody sweat awaits, why with such a calm smile of irony *he* takes the cup of poison which his accusers, in the bitterness of their hate, present to him? He was great indeed, that greatest among the heathen that know not God; but, in that cold smile on the very verge of that last, that most momentous step which man can take, I find not his greatness. It does indeed appear great that he did not tremble at the step he was taking into a land which to him was really a land unknown, which was disclosed to him only by the faint and feeble light of a presentiment of the heart. But, had he not been greater still, if, even in him, who, with all his wisdom, was after all but a sinful child of man, the thought that he must stand before his Judge had driven the blood quicker and hotter through his veins? Had he not been greater, if a feeling of pitying sympathy for the guilt which his accusers were incurring, and for the blindness of his fellow-countrymen, had crimsoned his cheek and darkened his brow with sorrow? But the man who, in the days of his life, instead of pitying the sinners, has ironically laughed at the fools, such a one will find something to smile at even in the deepest blindness of his people. Oh! the guilt of such is indeed not once to be measured with the guilt of the

chosen people, that people who outraged him on whom all the promises hung, the holy Lamb of God; and yet had there been in the heart of the Grecian sage but a spark of the holy sympathy of Jesus with sinful humanity, surely then a shadow of sorrow must have passed over the smiling countenance. No; the Saviour could not have been so holy, so loving, and so great, and the guilt of his murderers could not have been so enormous as it was, had he thought on that hour without the sweat of agony, or had he gone to meet it with only that horror of death which all the other children of men experience."

Deeply as our Saviour felt his sufferings, they never once awakened a sentiment bordering on misanthropy. He was not insensible to the foul ingratitude and the malignant wickedness of his enemies; and sometimes he addressed them in words of severity scathing as the lightning flash. But love was the moving impulse of the severe as well as of the tender in all his intercourse with men. And, apart from its consummation in the offering of himself for the guilty, the personal sentiments with which it inspired him found glorious expression in the prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The most obvious lesson which Christ has taught us by the manner in which he bore his sufferings is the duty of submission and patience. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," says the apostle James. It was very great, and yet not comparable to that of Jesus Christ. In all "the fight of afflictions" which Christ fought, there arose no sentiment of wrath towards man, and no sentiment of rebellion against his Father in heaven. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his

mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."* In his words to the traitor, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" there was indicated a "divine repose" of spirit. There was no ebullition of anger; the pure mirror of his holy soul was never once ruffled by the storm of human passion. In the history of his trial before Pilate, his silence is thrice remarked on.† "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He was conscious of his own rectitude, and equally conscious that, before such a judge and with such accusers, words would be of no avail. "False accusation causes the sickened heart to boil with agitation;" and yet Jesus answered them only by silence. When words were necessary for the interests of both, he used them; but his words were calm and sublime as his silence itself. When Pilate said, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus told him that the scales of justice were committed to him by a higher hand. When the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus spoke and testified, "Thou hast said." When Pilate asked him, "Art thou a king?" Jesus spoke and testified again, "Thou sayest I am a king." And when before the high priest one of the servants struck him with the palm of his hand and said, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" here again Jesus was not silent, but answered, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the

* Isaiah liii. 7. † Matthew xxvi. 62; Luke xxiii. 8, 9; John xix. 9.

evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Only in this last instance does Jesus even seem to have cared for his personal defence. But we see in his words an assertion of his judicial rights not unlike that of Paul when he pleaded his rights as a Roman citizen at Philippi; and we see in them not only a rebuke of unjust violence, but an act of grace towards the man that was guilty of it. That man was not seared and hardened, like his masters; he was but an ignorant servant, and committed the outrage in erring zeal for a consecrated office. With such a man Jesus condescends to reason. But he did it in the spirit of meekness, and not as one disturbed by insult.

Such is the holy pattern of patience of the "Lamb of God." Whoever loves him, whoever glows at the contemplation of that spotless Lamb, as he stands before his judges in the majesty of silence, oh! let him learn to calm the passion of his breast, let him learn to pacify the rising of his anger, when unjustly accused.

The religion of Christ is a religion of joy. The wilderness and the solitary place are made glad by it; and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. The eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of the deaf are unstopped; the lame man leaps as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sings; for by reason of it copious waters break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. "Yet in some respects—in its position in the world, in its tone of teaching, in *many* of its effects upon those who receive it—the religion of Christ *is* eminently the religion of sorrow. It presupposes a corrupt nature—it purposes to subdue it; this in itself is a matter always of no slight difficulty, often of much anxiety and distress.

It sets before us an ideal of perfection, which the feebleness of our natural constitution has, perhaps, never allowed any one disciple to reach, but which serves to keep alive a perpetual and melancholy sense of deficiency. It stands in the midst of a hostile world which it condemns, and which assails *it*."

Its founder was himself, as we have seen, a man of sorrows; and the disciple must expect to be as his master. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," said Christ; "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." If we turn to the earliest records of his church, we shall find how both the tribulation and the good cheer were realized in the experience of his followers.

The proto martyr of the Christian faith suffered in a spirit worthy of its founder. He was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" and his enemies "were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake." The contrast is very striking between the indignant zeal with which he denounced the *sin* of his judges, and the forgiving love which he showed to themselves when they became his murderers. He first uttered a prayer for himself in the words of Jesus Christ, which he knew were spoken from the cross, and which he may himself have heard from those holy lips. And then deliberately kneeling down, he cried, with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

The death of Stephen is a bright passage in the earliest history of the church. "Where in the annals of the church," it has well been said," can we find so perfect an image of a pure and blessed saint as that which is drawn in the concluding verses of the

seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? And the brightness which invests the scene of the martyr's last moments is the more impressive from its contrast with all that has preceded it since the crucifixion of Christ. The first apostle who died was a traitor. The first disciples of the Christian apostles whose deaths are recorded were liars and hypocrites. The kingdom of the Son of man was founded in darkness and gloom; but a heavenly light reappeared with the martyrdom of Stephen. The revelation of such a character at the moment of death was the strongest of all evidences and the highest of all encouragements. Nothing could more confidently assert the divine power of the new religion; nothing could prophesy more surely the certainty of its final victory."*

From Stephen to Paul the transition is easy and natural in many respects. Historically it is so. The false witnesses, when stoning the proto-martyr to death, "laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul." "And Saul was consenting unto his death." A Spanish painter, in a picture of Stephen conducted to the place of execution, has represented Saul as walking by the martyr's side with melancholy calmness. He consents to his death from a sincere, though mistaken conviction of duty; and the expression of his countenance is strongly contrasted with the rage of the baffled Jewish doctors and the ferocity of the crowd who flock to the scene of bloodshed. Paul's own after-testimony, however, is, that at this period, instead of having any inward relentings, he was "exceedingly mad" against the

* Conybeare and Howson's "Life of St. Paul."

followers of Christ, a very fanatic in the fierceness of his persecution of them. But the painter worked according to the idea of his art in throwing upon the persecutor's countenance the shadow of his coming repentance; and we cannot dissociate the martyrdom of Stephen from the conversion of Saul. During those days of blindness and solitude at Damascus, the remembrance of the recently witnessed martyrdom of Stephen must have presented itself with peculiar power. The spectacle of so much faith, so much constancy, so much love, could not be lost. It is hardly too much to say, with Augustine, that "the church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen."

Doctrinally likewise there is a very marked connection between Stephen and Paul. In those views of the world-wide enlargement of the church of God, and of its entire freedom from Judaism which it was the apostle's peculiar mission to proclaim, Stephen was his forerunner. But we have to speak of them now as fellow-sufferers, called to bear the same cross, and bearing it in the same unearthly spirit.

To tell the tale of Paul's sufferings would be to tell the tale of his whole life. From the hour when in the darkness of the night he was let down in a basket from a window in the outer wall of the city of Damascus to escape the murderous hands of those Jews who watched the city gates day and night that they might kill him, to the hour when he laid his head down on the block to receive the stroke of the Roman executioner, his was a life of danger and suffering. Long before the close of it he wrote of himself in these words, in no spirit of boasting, but in self-vindication:—"Are they servants of Christ? such

far more am I. In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; five times I received from the Jews the forty stripes save one; thrice was I scourged with rods; once I was stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I spent in the open sea. In journeyings often; in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in toil and weariness, often in sleepless watchings; in hunger and thirst, often without bread to eat; in cold and nakedness. And besides all the rest, that which presses upon me daily, the care of all the churches." *

What a life of incessant adventure, toil, and danger! The man who passed through it, it might be inferred, must have been a man of superhuman physical strength. But it was quite otherwise. There is good evidence that the man who endured and dared all this was a man of small stature and often of feeble health. Then he must have been a man of bold daring, and of a hard heart; in short, a natural Stoic. A man of bold daring doubtless he was, but a tenderer heart never beat in human bosom than that which beat in his. No Stoic was the apostle Paul. Never has woman shed warmer tears than those which flowed from his eyes. For certain, then, may it be inferred that his life must have been one of the deepest misery; he must have trodden the earth in his many journeys, from east to west and north to south, under the impenetrable gloom of the shadow of death. Not so. There is, indeed, one grief that haunts him

* 2 Corinthians xi. 23—28. Conybeare.

everywhere; he is in "continual sorrow" because of the unbelief of his Jewish brethren. But even with this burden resting upon him, his letters, so far as they throw light on his inmost soul, breathe a spirit of uniform healthy cheerfulness. Is it possible, however, it may be asked, that Paul can have passed through thirty years, crowded with outrage at the hands of the nations which he sought to bless, without at the last becoming soured towards his kind, if not impatient towards his Master? We can answer with confidence, that neither of these evils befel his spirit. His writings betray no trace of misanthropy from first to last: his submission to Christ was never more cordial than when Christ in his providence required the surrender of his life.

It was about the month of August, A. D. 61, that Paul entered Rome, a prisoner, to be tried, on his own appeal, before Cæsar. Twelve months probably elapsed before the trial came on, and during this long period the freest scope was allowed to his labours, consistent with the military custody under which he was placed. And that which seemed at first to impede must really have deepened the impression of his eloquence. "For who could see without emotion that venerable form subjected by iron links to the coarse control of the soldier who stood beside him? How often must the tears of the assembly have been called forth by the upraising of that fettered hand, and the clanking of the chain which checked its energetic action!" During this first Roman imprisonment Paul was surrounded by many of his oldest and most valued friends, who were employed by him in varied services for Christ, and were a perpetual solace to his heart.

In one of his prison letters Paul expresses his hope of a speedy liberation. "Withal prepare me a lodging," he wrote to Philemon; "for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." But circumstances occurred which greatly increased his danger. The "virtuous Burrus," the pretorian prefect under whose authority his imprisonment had been so unusually mild, died, and was succeeded by a man who was already notorious for energetic wickedness. Nero was married at the same time to Poppæa, who had become a proselyte to Judaism. This infamous woman, not content with inducing Nero to divorce his young wife Octavia, had demanded and obtained and gloated over the head of her rival. Her power seemed now to have reached its zenith, but rose still higher at the beginning of the following year, upon the birth of a daughter, when temples were erected to her and her infant, and divine honours paid them. Poppæa exerted her influence over Nero in favour of the Jews, and patronized their emissaries at Rome; and assuredly no scruples of humanity would prevent her from seconding their demand for the punishment of Paul. By what means her influence was restrained or counteracted we know not.

When brought before the tribunal of the emperor, we may be sure that Paul did not quail or tremble. His life was not in the hands of Nero; he knew that, while the Lord had work for him to do on earth, he would shield him from the tyrant's sword; and if his work was over, how gladly would he "depart and be with Christ, which was far better!" To him all the majesty of Roman despotism was nothing more than an empty pageant; the imperial demigod himself was but one of "the princes of this world that come to nought."

The first trial of Paul issued in his acquittal. He was pronounced guiltless of the charges brought against him; his fetters were struck off, and he was liberated from his long captivity. After five years of labour, of which we have no record in Holy Scripture, we find him a second time a prisoner in Rome. His arrest took * place probably not later than mid-winter of A. D. 67–8, and he was immediately hurried to Rome. This second imprisonment was evidently more severe than the former. It was dangerous and difficult to seek his prison; † so perilous to show any public sympathy with him, that no Christian ventures to stand by him in the court of justice.‡ And as the final stage of his trial approaches, he looks forward to death as his certain sentence.§

There is one precious document—the Second Epistle to Timothy—preserved to the church, which was written at this period, which throws light on his sufferings and on the spirit in which he endured them. And for this purpose there is nothing more significant in the epistle than a verse which has often been deemed so insignificant as to be unworthy of a place in it. He had left his cloak with Carpus at Troas, and he begs Timothy to hasten before winter, and not to forget to bring it with him! ‖ "Jesus Christ, also, on the day of his death, spoke of his garment and his vesture. It was after a night of fatigue and anguish. He had been led through the streets of Jerusalem by torchlight, from street to street, from tribunal to tribunal, beaten and buffeted, blindfolded in mockery, and struck with sticks on the head. The morrow's

* We follow Conybeare and Howson's account of Paul's history.
† 2 Timothy i. 16.
‡ 2 Timothy iv. 16.
§ 2 Timothy iv. 6—8.
‖ 2 Timothy iv. 13.

sun had not risen when they bound his hands to lead him further, from the sacerdotal palace to Pilate's pretorium. There, his flesh torn with stripes, bathed with blood, then delivered over, in order to his final execution, into the hands of ferocious soldiers, he saw all his clothes taken from him, that he might be arrayed in a purple robe, while people knelt before him, and put a reed in his hand, and spat in his face. Then, before placing the cross on his torn limbs, his garments were thrown over his wounds, in order to his being taken to Calvary; but when they were about to proceed to his execution, they were taken from him for the third time; and it was then that, spoiled of everything, first of his upper garment, then of his very inner vesture, he was to die on the felon's gibbet, in view of an immense concourse of people. A thousand years before, in the age of the war of Troy, the Holy Spirit had dictated to the harp of David the words, 'They pierced my hands and my feet, they look and stare upon me; they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.'"

Paul, like his master, was spoiled of everything. When young, he was great among men, a favourite of priests and princes; but he forsook all for Christ. For thirty years and more he has been poor; he is now aged; in his last prison, in Rome, he is waiting for the sentence of death. Immured, according to tradition, in one of the dungeons of the Mamertine prison, winter is at hand, and he is in want of clothing to protect him from the cold. He had left his cloak two hundred leagues off, and in the chilly dungeons of Rome there was nobody to lend him one. "We were ourselves last year in Rome," says Gaussen, "in

a hotel, at the beginning of November, on a rainy day. With what a lively feeling, under the chill impressions of the evening, did we represent to ourselves the holy apostle Paul in the subterranean prisons of the capital, dictating the last of his letters, expressing his regret at the want of his cloak, and begging Timothy to send it to him before winter!"

"Who is there now," he continues, in defence of the inspiration of these Scriptures, "that would wish to retrench from the inspired epistles a trait so affecting and so pathetic? Does not the Holy Ghost take you as it were into Paul's prison, there to have instant ocular evidence of his affectionate self-renunciation and sublime poverty? Who could tell the strength and the comfort which, by their very familiarness and their actuality, they may have carried into prisons and cottages? Who could reckon up the poor men and the martyrs to whom such traits have imparted encouragement, example, and joy? We recollect in Switzerland, in our day, the pastor Juvet, who was refused a coverlet, twenty years ago, in the prisons of the canton de Vaud. One may call to mind in the universal church Jerome of Prague, who was shut up for three hundred and forty days in the prisons of Constance, in the bottom of a dark, fetid tower, and never allowed to leave it except to appear before his murderers. No more has there been forgotten, among the English, holy Bishop Hooker, dragged from his damp, disgusting cellar, covered with wretchedly poor clothes and a borrowed cloak, as he proceeded to the stake, tottering on his staff, and bent double with rheumatism. Venerable fathers, blessed martyrs, you would no doubt call to mind your brother Paul, shut up in the prisons of Rome,

suffering from cold and nakedness, and asking for his cloak. Ah! unhappy he who feels not the sublime humanity, the tender grandeur, the provident and divine sympathy, the depth and the charm of such a mode of instruction." "We behold Paul standing," to use the words of Mr. Robert Haldane, "upon the confines of the two worlds—in this world about to be beheaded, as guilty, by the Emperor of Rome—in the other world to be crowned, as righteous, by the King of kings; here deserted by men, there to be welcomed by angels; here in want of a cloak to cover him, there to be clothed upon with his house from heaven."

The severity of the treatment to which the apostle was now subjected is accounted for by the history of the times. It was in the summer of the year after his liberation from his first imprisonment that the first imperial persecution of Christianity broke out. Then first, as it appears, Christians were recognized as a distinct body, and not as a Jewish sect. "When the alarm and indignation of the people was excited by the tremendous ruin of a conflagration which burned down almost half the city, it answered the purpose of Nero (who was accused of causing the fire) to avert the rage of the populace from himself to the already hated votaries of a new religion. Tacitus describes the success of this expedient, and relates the sufferings of the Christian martyrs, who were put to death with circumstances of the most aggravated cruelty. Some were crucified, some disguised in the skins of beasts, and hunted to death with dogs; some were wrapped in robes impregnated with inflammable materials, and set on fire at night, that they might serve to illuminate the circus of the Vatican and the gardens of Nero, where this diabolical monster exhibited the agonies of

his victims to the public, and gloated over them himself, mixing among the spectators in the costume of a charioteer. Brutalized as the Romans were by the perpetual spectacle of human combats in the amphitheatre, and hardened by popular prejudice against the 'atheistical' sect, yet the tortures of the victims excited even their compassion. 'A very great multitude,' as Tacitus informs us, perished in this manner; and it appears from his statement, that the mere fact of professing Christianity was accounted sufficient to justify their execution; the whole body of Christians being considered as involved in the crime of firing the city."

The first excitement which followed the fire had passed away before Paul was carried in bonds to Rome. Yet this and the privilege of citizenship which he claimed were not sufficient to protect him from injustice and cruelty. We have no means of knowing the precise charge which was brought against him. But his trial was probably not long delayed. And we have an account of the first hearing of the cause from his own pen. Writing to Timothy immediately after, he said:—"When I was first heard in my defence, no man stood by me, but all forsook me: I pray that it be not laid to their charge. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus stood by me, and strengthened my heart; that by me the proclamation of the gospel might be made in full measure, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."* We see, from this statement, that it was dangerous even to appear in public as the friend or adviser of the apostle. "No advocate would venture to plead his cause; no *procurator* to aid him in arranging

* 2 Timothy iv. 16—18.

the evidence; no *patronus* to appear as his supporter, and to deprecate, according to ancient usage, the severity of the sentence. But he had a more powerful Intercessor, and a wiser Advocate, who could never leave him nor forsake him. The Lord Jesus was always near him, but now was felt almost visibly present in the hour of his need."

Paul was remanded to prison to wait for the second stage of his trial. It seems that he himself did not expect the final decision would be given till the following winter,* whereas it actually took place about midsummer. But we are not left to conjecture the feelings with which he awaited the consummation; they are expressed in that sublime strain of triumphant hope which has nerved the hearts of a thousand martyrs:—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." "The tribunal of Nero faded from his sight, and the vista was closed by the judgment-seat of Christ." Luke was the only one of his habitual attendants who now remained to minister to him, and his faithful companionship consoled him in the weary hours of constrained inactivity. It is not probable, though not impossible, that "his own" Timothy may have reached Rome in time to receive his dying commands, and cheer his latest earthly sufferings.

We have no record of the final stage of Paul's trial, and cannot tell the cause of its speedy conclusion.

* 2 Timothy iv. 21.

We only know that it resulted in a sentence of capital punishment, to be inflicted by decapitation; his Roman citizenship saving him from the ignominious death of lingering torture which had been lately inflicted on so many of his brethren. He was led out to execution beyond the city walls, upon the road to Ostia, the port of Rome. "As the martyr and his executioners passed on, their way was crowded with a motley multitude of goers and comers between the metropolis and its harbour—merchants hastening to superintend the unloading of their cargoes—sailors eager to squander the profits of their last voyage in the dissipations of the capital—officials of the government, charged with the administration of the provinces, or the command of the legions on the Euphrates or the Rhine—Chaldean astrologers—Phrygian eunuchs—dancing-girls from Syria, with their painted turbans—mendicant priests from Egypt, howling for Osiris—Greek adventurers, eager to turn their national cunning into Roman gold—representatives of the avarice and ambition, the fraud and lust, the superstition and intelligence, of the imperial world. Through the dust and tumult of that busy throng, the small troop of soldiers threaded their way silently, under the bright sky of an Italian midsummer. They were marching, though they knew it not, in a procession more truly triumphal than any they had ever followed in the train of general or emperor, along the Sacred Way. Their prisoner, now at last and for ever delivered from his captivity, rejoiced to follow his Lord 'without the gate.' The place of execution was not far distant; and there the sword of the headsman ended his long course of sufferings, and released that heroic soul from that feeble body.

Weeping friends took up his corpse, and carried it for burial to those subterranean labyrinths where, through many ages of oppression, the persecuted church found refuge for the living and sepulchres for the dead.

"Thus died the apostle, bequeathing to the church, in her government and her discipline, the legacy of his apostolic labours; leaving his prophetic words to be her living oracles; pouring forth his blood to be the seed of a thousand martyrdoms. Thenceforth, among the glorious company of the apostles, among the goodly fellowship of the prophets, among the noble army of martyrs, his name has stood pre-eminent. And wheresoever the holy church throughout all the word doth acknowledge God, there Paul of Tarsus is revered as the greatest human teacher of a truly catholic religion, the herald of glad tidings to all mankind."

Paul's example, as a sufferer, is not to be set aside by the consideration that he was an apostle and endowed with supernatural gifts. It was not his miraculous powers that sustained his spirit, but the presence and grace of the Lord Jesus. That presence, indeed, was sometimes manifested to him in a way in which it is not to Christians in these times. In Corinth the Lord said to him in the night by a vision, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee."* When in the castle of Antonia in Jerusalem, the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."†

* Acts xviii. 9, 10. † Acts xxiii. 11.

And when overtaken by storm and shipwreck on his way to Rome, he said to his fellow-voyagers, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." * And when he did stand before Cæsar, we are told by himself that "the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him." † Now all these manifestations of Christ to his suffering servant were in fulfilment of the same promises—"Preach the gospel to every creature," and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: . . . . . and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." ‡ The first three instances of "manifestation" which we have quoted were accompanied by supernatural visions, but the last was not. And the last is to be taken as the proper representative of the daily and habitual manifestation of Christ to his servant. While he favoured him *occasionally* with visions, he stood by him *habitually* by his inward grace, and "strengthened him" with that same strength which for these eighteen hundred years has carried joyfully to the stake those who never saw his person and never heard his voice. It was when he received a promise of *grace* sufficient for him, and of *strength* made perfect in his weakness, that the apostle said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions,

* Acts xxvii. 23—25. † 2 Timothy iv. 17. ‡ John xiv. 21.

in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." * The fountain, then, whence this great sufferer drew comfort and strength, is the common fountain, now as full and free as ever, of Divine grace and promise.

The principles under which he acted will likewise be found to be those which are common to the Christian character and life. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. *For the love of Christ constraineth us;* because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." † A course of action, in pursuit of which bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city, whose only visible rewards were dishonour and suffering, must have seemed to the world madness itself. But let men understand the principle which constrained to it, and the apparent madness will give place to the highest reason. It was for no abstractions, however true or profound, that Paul toiled and suffered. It was for Christ, the living Christ, once on earth, now in heaven—the living Christ, whose claims to faith and love and obedience, were paramount to every other. This was his impulsive motive as a worker, and his sustaining principle as a sufferer.

Add to this the principle which is involved in these words:—"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen:* for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things

* 2 Corinthians xii. 9, 10. † 2 Corinthians v. 13—15.

which are not seen are eternal." * "Things unseen" were not abstractions in Paul's creed, nor visions of his imagination, but simple realities before the eye of his faith. Their magnitude and blessedness were ever present to his mind. He placed his afflictions in the one scale, and the glory to be revealed in the other. And although by themselves his afflictions were overwhelmingly heavy, yet, as compared with the "exceeding weight" of eternal glory, he counted them "light." "He endured as seeing Him that is invisible." This source of strength is common to all the saints of God; and, realized, it never fails.

In the history of Christian suffering, both that which has been endured in the open face of day, and that which has been endured in the privacy of domestic life, we have abundant evidence that the principles which enabled Paul to rejoice in tribulation are of universal efficacy, and that the ascended Saviour has never forsaken his followers.

They who have read the story of the early church "have read of a love not only stronger than death, but stronger than the protracted death of a life of persecution. They know that peasants from the plough, and slaves from the market-place, achieved wonders of fortitude such as the proud philosophy of old time had scarcely dared to imagine in the brightest visions of human perfections—that poor men, unconscious heroes who had never heard of heroism, not only sought the flames (*that* might be the weakness of enthusiasm), but—what no enthusiasm but that of God's eternal Spirit ever wrought—from the heart of

* 2 Corinthians iv. 17, 18.

the flames called for pardon upon the oppressors; so that the fires of persecution and the prayers of the persecuted rose, for vengeance and for mercy, to heaven together."

The persecutors of the early Christians included in their number some of the best and most enlightened of the governors of Rome. When Pliny the Younger was appointed to the government of one of the provinces of Asia Minor, he found multitudes of the people not simply indifferent to the religion of the state, but eager to denounce it as false. The temples were forsaken, and the images of the gods and of the emperor were defrauded of their customary homage. As the representative of the majesty of the empire, Pliny laboured, by imperial edicts, by judicial inquests, and by the infliction of capital punishment on the refractory, to recover the ground which the idolatries of Rome had lost. Under the sudden pressure of these violent measures, many cleared themselves of all suspicion by compliance with the sacrificial rites, and by uttering, with the required maledictions, the name which had come to designate the new community. "For the purpose of effecting these conversions in a legal manner, the Roman magistrate had caused the effigies of the gods and of the emperor to be brought into court. Can we fancy that we see them coming forward, dolls, or be they what they might, shouldered by the officers of justice, and nodding as they came? In style of art vastly superior are the simulacra to the hideous blocks which now grin in our museums, representative of the gods of Tahiti and the Sandwich Islands; and yet, whether more or less sightly, these effigies, and the vast system of worship which they symbolized, were

blocks standing in the way of that next great movement forward which the human mind was to take.

"This enlightened Roman gentleman, well conversant as he was with whatever had been said and taught by the philosophers of Greece and Rome, was conscious of no humiliation; he did not blush when these stupid symbols had been poised near him, and he, prompting the form of appellation—*præeunte me*—pointed to them as fit objects of devout regard. The accused, pale and trembling, as they did that which he did not blush to exact, offered the incense and the wine, and departed." But, however many, at a time of alarm, might be the faltering and the timid, there were never wanting others who, as Pliny tells us, "could by no means be induced either to offer sacrifice to the gods, or to speak injuriously of Christ." Rather than do this, they endured torments and accepted death.

So great has been the number of the martyrs of Jesus, and such their deeds and sufferings, that one may adopt the language of the apostle John, and say, "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Of the many who have suffered for Christ at the hands of the apostate church of Rome, let one example suffice.

The proto-martyr of the Scottish Reformation was the great-grandson of a Scottish king. In an age when Scottish chivalry was in the zenith, his father enjoyed the reputation of being the first of Scottish knights, the

Patrick Hamilton; born 1504; died Feb. 29, 1528.

gallant defender of youth and beauty. No sight was so familiar to young PATRICK HAMILTON'S eyes as that of his father's armour, ever bright and ready for use; and no talk so familiar to his ears as that of his father's deeds of Chivalry in many lands. The lessons of true knighthood were doubtless often taught him. But it needed other lessons and other influences to turn the scion of Scotland's bravest knight into her first confessor of Christ's gospel. The history of his enlightenment and conversion may be read elsewhere. Of his last conflict do we alone speak now.

Within a few hours of the sentence passed on him by the archbishop of St. Andrew's, the stake was ready for the martyr, and the martyr for the stake. The spirit of power and of love was upon him. The officials of the archbishop offered him his life if he would recant the confession he had made in the cathedral. But in vain. The executioners then stepped forward and bound him to the stake by an iron chain. Thus bound, he prayed, like his Master for his persecutors; for "there were many of them blinded by ignorance, that they knew not what they did." For himself he prayed that Christ "would strengthen him by his Holy Spirit, that he might steadfastly abide the cruel pains of fire." The fagots were kindled thrice, but the flames took no steady hold of the pile, and the good man's sufferings were protracted in consequence. The flames were at last thoroughly kindled. But, surrounded by them, he still remembered in his torments his widowed mother, and commended her with his dying breath to the care and sympathy of his friends. When nearly burnt through his middle by the fiery chain, a voice in the

crowd of spectators called aloud to him, that if he still had faith in the doctrine for which he died, he should give a last sign of his constancy. Whereupon he raised three fingers of his half-consumed hand, and held them steadily in that position till he ceased to live. His last audible words were, "How long, Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this kingdom? how long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus receive my spirit." The execution lasted for nearly six hours; "but during all that time," says one who witnessed with profound emotion the whole scene,—Alexander Alane, then a canon of St. Andrew's, but thenceforward a reformer and sufferer for Christ's sake,—"the martyr never gave one sign of impatience or anger, nor ever called to heaven for vengeance upon his persecutors: so great was his faith, so strong his confidence in God."

Thus tragically but gloriously died, on the 29th of February, 1528, when only four-and-twenty years of age, this noble martyr in a noble cause. "The death of Sir Patrick, the father, on the streets of Edinburgh eight years before, was the death of a hero of chivalry," says Professor Lorimer: "the death of his son, at St. Andrew's, was the death of a hero of religion, in the noble battle of God's truth, in the high service of the religious emancipation of his country. In both sire and son we discover the same high sense of honour and duty, as they severally understood what honour and duty required at their hands; in both, the same intrepid daring in the presence of danger, the same forwardness in the path of self-devotion. But along with these grand resemblances there were also exhibited some striking contrasts. The father died a victim to the faction and ambition of his powerful

house : the son gave himself a sacrifice to his country and the church of God. The father poured out his blood in the tragic rage of insulted honour, and to vindicate his good name as a soldier and a Hamilton : the son yielded his life with the calm and gentle, but resolute, fortitude of a martyr, praying with his latest breath, 'Father, forgive them.'" The brave Sir Patrick died the last, or all but the last, of the Scottish knights of the middle age, the age of chivalry. His son had nothing in him of the middle age, save the noble and generous blood which it transmitted to him. He was the first illustrious Scotsman of modern times; and the blood of the martyr was the seed of the church.

Madame Guyon was an illustrious sufferer for Christ's sake. She never left the church of Rome; but her doctrines, notwithstanding the errors that were mixed with them, were essentially antagonistic to those of Romanism. The doctrine of "sanctification by faith" struck those who heard her with astonishment. Sanctification itself was repugnant, and sanctification by *faith* inexplicable. In the Roman Catholic church, with its "carnal ordinances" and its purgatory, the toleration of a sentiment which ascribes the highest degree of purity to the operation of faith alone was impossible. So that, instead of being regarded as a humble and devout Catholic, she found herself suddenly denounced as a heretic. But "the word was in her heart," and she would utter it.

When sailing down the Seine, on her departure from Paris to the south of France, her little daughter, afterwards the duchess of Sully, then a child five years old, sat in the boat, and employed herself in cutting the leaves and twigs which she gathered

on the river banks, or as they floated by on the water, into the shape of crosses. Apparently unconscious of what she was doing, she fastened many of them to the garments of her mother. Her mother soon found herself almost covered with crosses, and could not help looking on the act of her child as a foreshadowing of what she would be called to endure. But what was her surprise when she saw her daughter afterwards weaving together a crown of leaves and river flowers! When she had completed it, she insisted on placing it on her mother's head, saying, "After the cross you shall be crowned." This perfected the symbol: first the cross, and then the crown." No wonder that the doing of the little child should seem to be a sign of Providence. It needed no superstition to suggest its lesson. But though "bonds and afflictions" awaited her, Madame Guyon could add with the apostle, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy."

During her five years' labours in the south of France, this good woman was driven from place to place in the most cruel manner, and was regarded as one who was "turning the world upside down." At Thonon, the populace attacked the solitary cottage where she resided with her little daughter and two female domestics. They trampled down and laid waste her garden, hurled stones through her windows, and uttered their threats and insults round the house the whole night. Then came an episcopal order to quit the diocese. "The good which God has enabled me to do," she says, "was condemned more than the greatest crimes. Crimes were tolerated; but the work of God, resulting in the conversion and sanctification of souls,

could not be endured. All this while I had no uneasiness of mind. My soul found rest in God: I never repented that I had left all to be what seemed to be his will. I believed that God had a design in everything which took place; and I left all in his hands, both the sorrow and the joy."

On her return, in 1686, to Paris, which the fame of her doings and sufferings had reached before her, she became, for a time, the centre of an illustrious circle, who listened with delight to the exposition of her doctrines. But civil and ecclesiastical authority was soon alarmed by the progress of her opinions; and she was cast into one prison after another. Her faithful maid, partaker of her piety and of her trials, was imprisoned with her in the castle of Vincennes, and there they were helpers of each other's faith and joy.

Madame Guyon wrote religious songs, and "together," she says, "we sang praises to thee, O our God. It sometimes seemed to me, as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing to do now but to sing;" a sentiment which she embodied, in one of her imprisonments, in a touching little poem, which begins thus:—

"A little bird I am
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth thee."

From Vincennes she was transferred to Vaugirard, and thence, in September, 1698, to the Bastille, in one of whose dungeons she was immured in solitary confinement four long years. The horrors of such an imprisonment are not to be imagined, far less described. "The prisoner looks upward, but he sees no

sun; he gazes at the straggling but dim light of his window, but it shows him no green fields or woods; he listens and hears, or thinks he hears a voice coming up from the streets below, which reminds him of a child or brother; but alas! child and brother, and the hopes and happiness of home, are no longer his. Sad and weeping, he walks from side to side of his dark room; ill finding his mind sinking under a sorrow which it is his duty to strive against, he resorts to any sort of occupation or amusement," which, however, often fails to ward off the encroachments of a drivelling idiocy or a raving madness. "The histories of the Bastille are full of attempts to train spiders by supplying them with food, and to avert the horrors of reflection by ascertaining the dimensions of the room, or counting the studs upon the door. Some have spent whole days in pouring water from one dish into another; or in disposing in fanciful arrangements the pieces of which their fagots were composed."

How Madame Guyon spent and endured the long years of her imprisonment is not known. Every prisoner who entered the Bastille was obliged to take an oath, by which he bound himself to maintain an inviolable secresy with respect to all that he had seen or heard there. But, in anticipation of her imprisonment, she wrote to a friend: "I feel no anxiety in view of what my enemies will do to me. I have no fear of anything but being left to myself. So long as God is with me, neither imprisonment nor death will have any terrors." And in a single passage in her autobiography, she says:—"I, being in the Bastille, said to thee, O my God, if thou art pleased to render me a spectacle to men and angels, thy holy

will be done. All that I ask is, that thou wilt be with and save those that love thee; so that neither life nor death, neither principalities nor powers, may ever separate them from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. . . . If I can only be accepted of him, I am willing that all men should despise and hate me. Their strokes will polish what may be defective in me, so that I may be presented in peace to Him for whom I die daily. Without his favour I am wretched. O Saviour, I present myself before thee an offering, a sacrifice. Purify me in thy blood that I may be accepted of thee."

In the same tower of the Bastille with Madame Guyon, was confined the celebrated prisoner known as the Man of the Iron Mask, and she may have heard, in her cell, the melancholy notes of the guitar with which her fellow-prisoner beguiled a captivity whose horrors had then lasted seven-and-thirty years. Why the Man of the Iron Mask was imprisoned, or who he was, is one of the mysteries of history. Madame Guyon was there because she trusted in her Saviour with a faith which repudiated the merits of those services which were ordained by the church to which she still clung, and loved him with a love that rose above all earthly love, and was prepared for any sacrifice for his name's sake. She regarded herself as a "martyr for the Holy Ghost," a martyr for the doctrine of sanctification, "the doctrine of the coming and triumphant reign of the Holy Spirit in men's souls, and of their personal and entire dependence on his divine power and influence." The real objection to her doctrines was, that involving, as they did, a reliance upon faith alone, as the true foundation of the Christian life in all its extent, they tended to sub-

vert some of the received ideas and practices of the Roman Catholic church.

Madame Guyon's constitution, never strong, was broken down at last by the stony chill of rigorous winters, and by the noxious vapours which steamed from the stagnant moat in summer. She was liberated in 1702, and sent to Blois, a picturesque old city on the Loire. There, in exile, she lived in quiet, and probably in great weakness, sought out from time to time by visitors from distant provinces and other lands, as patient under the infirmities of declining age as beneath the persecutions of other days; finding, as she had always done, some sweet in every bitter, and a theme for praise in every trial.

The hour of death arrived in 1717. No clouds rested upon her vision; no doubts perplexed the fulness of her hope and joy. At half-past eleven o'clock on the night of the ninth of June, 1717, she breathed her last, in the seventieth year of her age.

> "Rest, gentle spirit, rest,
> Thy conflicts o'er, thy labours done;
> Angels thy friends; thy home
> The presence of the Holy One."

Martyrdom is as much a reality in the nineteenth century as in ages that are past. Christians, inspired by love to Christ and zeal for God, have only to be brought into collision with hostile powers, to suffer as did the martyrs of old, and to exhibit the same high and noble qualities of their faith. In the Island of Madagascar, not fewer than fifty Christians are known to have sealed their testimony with their blood since the expulsion of the missionaries in 1838. The Rev. William Ellis, in his visits to Madagascar in 1856, met and conversed repeatedly with their

widowed survivors and their orphan children, as well as with those who witnessed the steadfastness of their faith and the quiet triumph of their death. Deeply affecting, he says, were the details which he received of the sorrows and the consolations of the sufferers.

The Indian mutiny of 1857–8 involved many native Christians in this "great fight of afflictions" for Christ's sake. And many of the feeble sons of India were made strong to suffer, and exhibited those qualities which have made the history of martyrdom a history of spiritual heroism. Before the trial came, even those who knew them best, and trusted them most, would have trembled for the issue. But God was with them; and "cases occurred even of men who had previously occupied a low position among their brethren for piety and zeal, yet who, when confronted with the foe, and exposed to all the horrors which, in his malice, he might possibly impose upon them, suddenly burst forth like the sun from behind a cloud and baffled their very adversaries by the dazzling brightness of their Christian virtues." * Not only Hindustanis, but even Bengalis—a people the most unwarlike, and the least likely to possess any large share of physical courage—maintained their faith in the face of an immediate and cruel death, and are now numbered with "the noble army of martyrs."

From these sufferings for Christ's sake, we turn to the more ordinary afflictions of life; and of these the most common and the most affecting, probably, are the desolations of death. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath

* See Sherring's "Indian Church during the Great Rebellion."

he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war." * The tyrant that crushes an empire beneath his iron heel, is as powerless to retain his spirit as the meanest worm that he treads on. The wise man, with all his knowledge and genius, is as feeble under the assault of death as the fool. The master and the slave, the man of wealth and the beggar, the idle and the industrious,—"one event happeneth to them all." In palace and cottage alike, death does his work with all the uniformity and regularity with which the sun rises and sets.

But, after all, it is poor comfort to know this. My neighbour's wounds will not heal mine. The dark cloud that rests on his tabernacle, and fills all its chambers, sends no light into mine. There is better comfort than this within our reach. We do not live in a fatherless world. Dark as is the picture of human life, it would be darker still if to all its other miseries it were added that man is forsaken of his Father. Better to have his frown than to be overlooked and forgotten. Of his frown, indeed, there are evidences enough in the events of God's providence, in the present course of nature, and in our heart's consciousness. But, distressing as these are, the dread feeling of desolation that would accompany the conviction, that mankind have been so separated from their Maker as to be consigned to solitude and orphanage, would be more distressing still. Anything, anything, rather than to feel that there is no link of connection between us and the moral centre of the creation; that God never thinks of us, and that we are absolutely alone in the universe.

We turn, then, to his word, and we feel that it is

* Ecclesiastes viii. 8.

something even to be told whence death came. The story of its entrance into the world is a very sad one; and in the light of it death becomes to us a perpetual token of divine displeasure. Yet is it something to know that man was not made mortal,—that mortality did not belong to his original nature. There is hope even in this. In the history of death, we find, moreover, two instances in which man hath not died; and we receive them as palpable testimony to an invisible state of existence. This testimony does not stand alone. Implicitly or explicitly, the word of God is full of the doctrine, and Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to the full light of perfect day by his gospel.

"The Divine voice," it has been said, "is never so truly heard as when it speaks through human experience and sympathies." The Old Testament tells us of the sentiments and language of three bereaved fathers, marked by a great similarity and by an instructive difference. The similarity is to be found in the greatness of the calamity with which each of these fathers was visited; in the strong feeling with which nature was agitated, the very opposite of stoical insensibility; and in the profound submission of their souls at the same time to the will of God. But there is an instructive difference. There is a marked gradation in their submission to God. "Aaron held his peace." This is the lowest degree of submission. But, in his circumstances, it was a great deal. He was still; he opened not his mouth, because God did it. Eli said, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth good in his sight." This was a more active and hearty acquiescence in the divine will than Aaron's silence. But Job's was more active and hearty still: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

We, Christians, have the benefit of the experience of these ancient worthies; and when death invades our families, their example should guide our souls into patience and comfort. Yea, we have a great advantage over them. They enjoyed but the dawn: we enjoy the perfect day. That scene of mingled majesty and grace which is recorded in the eleventh chapter of John, and those glorious revelations which are made to us in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are such, that, if we apprehend them, and use them as we are entitled to do for our solace and joy, the exclamation "O Death," will no longer be the involuntary expression of astonishment or of anguish, but the exultant utterance of triumph: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Allen F. Gardiner; born at Basildon, June 28, 1794; died Sept. 1851.

Captain ALLEN F. GARDINER may be classed among either the WORKERS or the SUFFERERS of the church of Christ. He was both. The energy which in youth was devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, was turned by the grace of God into the channel of Christian philanthropy; and it was an energy which in other circumstances might have made him a Napoleon, a Nelson, or a Wellington. But with an apostolic self-surrender it was all consecrated to the service of his great master Jesus Christ. The projects on which it was expended may not all have been wisely planned; certain it is that his moral heroism seems to have been thwarted in many of its high resolves; but it has left lessons of its own, notwithstanding, which

will long be precious to the heart of the church of Christ.

On his first going to sea, Allen Gardiner was restrained from many evils by the remembrance of his mother's prayers. In moments of hazard or of temptation his thoughts would fly homewards unbidden, and imagine the mother at prayer for her son. But soon the thread was snapped, which, like an electric wire, used, as a touch from home, to convey an instantaneous flash of home thoughts and home feelings into his heart; and, when his mother died, it seemed as if religion would die too. By degrees the very form of it was laid aside. For a time, young Gardiner was charmed by what seemed the bold, outspoken opinions of sceptical companions. And, from the age of twenty to twenty-five, his life was spent in the continual pursuit of pleasurable excitement. Still, amid the headstrong passions of youth and the eager pursuit of professional occupations, the fire of early impressions flashed forth at the death or danger of a friend, or his own narrow escape; and, at last, somewhere about 1820 or 1821, being then a lieutenant, with his ship at Penang, he was brought to a better mind. And when he returned to England, in 1822, he was a "new man," and ever after, both as a seaman and a missionary, he "lived to Christ."

In 1843, while friends were deliberating on some of his proposals, he resolved to employ the pause which was forced upon him in circulating the word of God among the Spanish-speaking population of South America. In executing this undertaking, life and liberty were often in danger, but he counted nothing dear to himself, if he might in any way be honoured to carry the gospel to those who were sitting under the

shadow of papal or pagan darkness. In spite of fever, priestly opposition, civil war, and reckless banditti, he accomplished his work, sold his Bibles, and in seven months was again in England to resume his plea on behalf of the heathens of Patagonia.

At last a small society was formed to aid him in his work, and three unsuccessful attempts were made, from 1844 to 1850, to establish a mission among these outcast and desperate tribes. In 1850, Captain Gardiner sailed from England for the last time, accompanied by a brave band of Christian pioneers, consisting of two catechists (John Maidment and Richard Williams), a ship carpenter (Joseph Erwin), who had been with him before, and gave as his reason for going now, that "being with Capt. Gardiner was like a heaven upon earth—he was such a man of prayer," and three Cornish fishermen, of high character and simple piety, who offered themselves to man two launches which the captain was taking with him. These seven warm-hearted men parted, on the 7th of September, 1850, from all they loved on earth.

On the 5th of December, they were landed on Picton Island; and on the 20th, they bade final adieu to the *Ocean Queen* which had conveyed them thither. Their letters of that date breathed a spirit of cheerful endurance and unanimity, and relieved their friends in England from anxiety on their behalf. It was believed that the stores which they had taken with them were sufficient to last for six months; that they had guns and abundance of ammunition, and nets for fishing; and that, if necessary, the mission boats made a retreat to the colony possible. But, alas! the first day's expedition resulted in the loss of the anchor of one of the launches, the spare timber, and both the dingies.

And the next day startled them by the discovery that the powder, which they had brought with them, and on which they were dependent for obtaining fresh food, had never been landed, and was away in the ship which had brought them.

Of the disasters which followed, amid the storms which swept over the inhospitable shores of Tierra del Fuego, and amid the treachery and cruelty of natives whose language they did not understand, the tale is one of the saddest that has ever been written ; but our only concern with it at present is to illustrate the grace of God in men whose faith never faltered, and who loved the Saviour and one another to the death.

On the 8th of May, 1851, Capt. Gardiner wrote in his cavern home, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. Mine eyes are unto thee, O God, the Lord. In thee is my trust."

A few weeks later, after a fearful storm, Capt. Gardiner read, to his own comfort and that of his brothers in affliction, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." And in his diary he wrote, as on several other occasions, what was indeed "A song in the night," which concluded thus:—

"Let *that* sweet word our spirits cheer,
Which quell'd the toss'd disciples' fear,
'Be not afraid.'
He who could bid the tempest cease,
Can keep our souls in perfect peace,
If on him stay'd;
And we shall own 'twas good to wait,
No blessing ever came too late."

A few weeks later still, and the holy band of brothers began to realize the frightful possibility of famine unrelieved. One of them was dying, and another was drooping. And Gardiner wrote in his

diary, "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee. Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."*

"Lord, at thy feet I humbly fall,
And all I have to thee resign;
Whate'er thou may'st in love recall,
'Tis best to lack; for all is thine.

"But should thy billows o'er me break,
When called to suffering, want, or pain,
This one petition I would make,
'Let faith burn bright, and love remain.'"

That one petition was answered. Faith did burn bright, and love remain to the last. Not one of that consecrated band failed in his faith in God, or his love to his fellow-sufferers. They helped and nursed each other with a care which seemed to become more tender as weakness and want increased. Nor did they repent having given themselves to a service which cost them so dear. On the 7th of August, eleven months after he had left England, and when life and strength were ebbing fast, he prayed, "Let not this mission fail, though we should not be permitted to labour in it; but graciously raise up other labourers, who may convey the saving truths of thy gospel to the poor blind heathen around us. Hasten the time when it shall be said of them that they are a people prepared for the Lord; and when thou dost make up thy jewels in the last day, may there be many of them shining like the stars in the kingdom of heaven, arrayed in white robes, and with palms in their hands, ascribing praise, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him who loved them, and gave himself for them." Three weeks after he wrote, "If I have a wish for my fellow-men, it is

* Psalm lvii. 1.

that the Tierra del Fuego mission might be prosecuted with vigour. But the Lord will direct and do all; for the times and the seasons are his, and the hearts of all are in his hands."

Richard Williams; born at Dursley, May 15, 1815; died Sept. 1851.

Captain Gardiner was not alone in his faith and peace. The diary of Mr. WILLIAMS, the surgeon, breathed the same spirit. In March, he wrote, "Our preserved meat is now nearly out, our store of spirits nearly exhausted; and when these are ended, as in a week or two they will be, then with the prophet Habakkuk I will exclaim, as I know by grace I shall be able to do, 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' I have been greatly gratified and affected by pleasing evidence that the work of grace is deepened in my brethren's minds. This, not in one, but in all. The trials and dangers we have been subject to have, by the sanctifying grace of God, had a gracious influence. Yesterday and Saturday I was quite affected by the kindness of the captain, and his humble and gentle deportment; his prayer too, yesterday, was an outpouring of his soul before God, in so unaffected and sincere a manner, with such unqualified expressions of resignation to the will, and humble trust in the mercy of God, that it did make me own with joy, that here is a child of God addressing the Father of all mercies. This morning, too, the prayer of Mr. Maidment was in like manner a sincere breathing out of the soul in humble supplication and

confident trust in God. Oh! I am glad and rejoice in the Lord to see my brethren thus meek and trustful."

The last entry in Mr. Williams's diary is dated, "Cook's river, Sunday night, or possibly Monday morning, June 21 or 22,"—the shortest day of those regions, when the night lasts sixteen hours. It tells how Pearce had come to sit up with the invalids, but had been persuaded to retire to rest; and it speaks of Badcock as dying. It contains expressions which would almost indicate that the mind of the writer was beginning to wander; but, even amidst confused perceptions, it shows that his faith in God was still clear and unclouded. Its last words are: "He that believeth shall not be confounded. Here I rest my hope. The Lord's will be done."

One after another of this devoted band was taken to his rest. Captain Gardiner was the fifth to die. The last words he wrote were:—"I neither hunger nor thirst, though five days without food. Marvellous loving-kindness to me, a sinner!" He died alone, and was unburied. The survivors, Mr. Williams and Pearce, one of the Cornish men, who had been for some time separated from their friends by a mile and a half's distance, were taken to their rest two days after, and the mission was extinct. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.—They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.—For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed

them."* The rain poured down from above, the winds blew loud and strong; but a sleepless Eye watched over their diaries and memoranda, that they might tell a tale of suffering and faith such as has seldom been told. As early as the January preceding, a vessel sailing from Monte Video was instructed to call at Picton Island to inquire after and assist the mission party, but she was wrecked. In June, a second vessel was commissioned to perform the same service, but the captain acted contrary to his express engagement and instructions. As soon as this dereliction of duty was discovered, another vessel was dispatched on a special voyage; but she reached the scene of disaster only in time to rescue the papers of the party, and commit to the grave the unburied remains of the holy men whose spirits had already found rest in the bosom of their God.

The mystery of such events as that which closed the earnest labours of Allen Gardiner is hidden from us now to be unfolded another day.

> "We see but dimly through the mists and vapours,
> Amid these earthly damps:
> What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
> May be heaven's distant lamps."

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous," in their persons, in their families, and in the world; some of them known only to Him that seeth in secret, and others endured before the gaze of friend and foe. Space would fail to tell their number, or to show forth the praise of that divine grace which sustains the Christian sufferer both in the silent grief of domestic life, and in the pains of cruel persecution.

* Revelation xiv. 12, 13; vii. 16, 17.

But, many as these afflictions are, the consolations of the divine promise, of the divine word, and of the divine presence, enable "the righteous" to sustain them all; and they find the deliverance that was effected for the tempest-tossed disciples on the sea of Galilee repeated in their own daily experience.

"Fear was within the tossing bark
When stormy winds grew loud,
And waves came rolling high and dark,
And the tall mast was bow'd.

"And men stood breathless in their dread,
And baffled in their skill;
But ONE was there, who rose and said
To the wild sea—*Be still!*

"And the wind ceased—it ceased: that word
Pass'd through the gloomy sky:
And troubled billows knew their Lord,
And fell beneath his eye."

We have remarked in another part of this volume on the law of social existence, that no man liveth to himself. It is equally a law of our social existence that no man dieth unto himself. Yet the latter may not be so obvious as the former. Thousands die every day whose names have never travelled beyond the narrowest bounds of their family circle. They are unknown while they live; they are unknown when they die. Their coming into the world is as unobserved as the budding of a single leaf in a crowded forest; and their departure is as unobserved as the fall of a single leaf in autumn. Leaves have come and leaves have gone for ages, and the forest seems to continue as it was.

More impressive still is another oft-repeated figure of man's insignificance. We cast a pebble into

the sea, it produces a momentary circle of ripples, sinks to the bottom to be for ever forgotten; and there it lies, while the waves roll over it as if it were not, and retain no impression of having once been cleft by its weight. Even so is it with man. He sinks into his grave; he is forgotten: the waves of life roll on as if he had never been, and retain, to all appearance, no impression either of his life or of his death. All this is true enough. And it is very humbling to man's pride that it should be so. But the comparison implies all that we ask. The stone, however small, produces a circle of ripples around it. The man, too, however insignificant, produces, when he goes down into the grave, a circle of ripples. He dieth not unto himself. True, the ripples on the water soon disappear, and the moral effects of a man's dying may soon disappear likewise. That is, they may soon cease to be traceable by the human eye. But it does not follow that they are in no sense and nowhere permanent. Science tells us that neither ship nor stone can sink to the bottom of the sea without affecting the whole body of the ocean. The eye cannot trace the effect—no instrument of measurement can verify it—but science assures us of it. The smallest change in the bottom of the ocean affects its whole surface; the smallest displacement of its waters by a descending body affects those waters to their remotest borders.

Tell us not then of the pebble that is forgotten, and the ripple that disappears. No man dieth to himself. However obscure and unknown he may have been, his death produces some impression; feeble and evanescent it may appear, but still real and more far-reaching than the observer's eye can trace. While

the moral atmosphere of the world, no longer receiving contributions from his words and deeds, is changed to the extent to which it was heretofore affected by them.

The Bible touches but very slightly upon the deaths of those whose history it records. "The principle of Scripture biography seems to be that of recording a man's life and deeds so far as they have tended to the furtherance of the kingdom of God; to tell us what he thought and what he did while the scene of life was before him, and while his thinking and doing could forward the work which he was sent to do; and to leave almost or quite unnoticed the manner of his departure hence." We have the history of the death of one apostle, and only one—that of James, who perished by the sword; and his martyrdom occupies but a single verse, and seems to have been introduced only because it was followed by an attempt upon the life of Peter, which did not succeed. We know nothing from Scripture of the death of Peter, or of John, or of Paul. "The book which registers their deeds does not sing their requiem; it is the record of the noble efforts which they made to preach the gospel of Christ, while they could travel from one country to another, and could endure hardness as good soldiers, and could offer themselves up a living sacrifice; and does not contain, as we might have fancied that it would, any account of the manner in which they left this world, or of the hopes or fears or degree of assurance with which they passed from hence to be for ever with the Lord." Of the sentiments of Paul, in anticipation of his death, we have some knowledge from a letter of his own. "I am now

ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* But of his actual sentiments when the hour arrived, and when the Roman lictors led him forth to die, we know nothing. The death of the martyr Stephen seems to be an exception to this rule. We are told how he died, and how he felt in dying. But it has been remarked, that "the death of the proto-martyr of the faith was precisely his contribution towards the great cause; nothing which he did in the living discharge of his diaconate can be compared in importance with the testimony which he gave to the truth and power of the gospel, when he, the first of the noble army of (Christian) martyrs, died in the vision of Christ and in charity with those who stoned him."†

There is another exception, however, more illustrious far than that of Stephen, in reference to which no such qualifying remark has to be made. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. The evangelists do not all record his birth, they do not all record his ascension; but not one of them has omitted to record his death, and to record it with a minuteness of detail which is bestowed on hardly any other portion of his history. His last acts and words are given us. The feelings of the sufferer are laid bare—his mental contest when he saw death approaching, his last conversations with his friends, his farewell to his mother, his last prayer, his expiring words;—they are all recorded on a more durable tablet than the engraved rock.

*2 Timothy iv. 6—8. † Rev. Harvey Goodwin : Hulsean lectures, 1856.

Whether we look at the design of Christ's dying, or at its manner, we feel that he "died not unto himself." As to its design, it was, let it never be forgotten, to make atonement for human guilt; and his followers cannot be fellow-workers with him in its accomplishment. There he stands, absolutely alone, and of the people there can be none with him.

The manner of his death is a blessing likewise. We cannot read the record of his words and acts and feelings, apart from the great propitiation he was offering, without feeling that he died not unto himself. That record has been a fountain, never dry, never sealed, whence have flowed rich comforts to the suffering people of God for eighteen centuries. "With strong crying and tears," have some of them prayed to be "saved from death." Shrinking from its pains and darkness, they have said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And, blessed be God, that these shrinkings may be felt and these prayers offered "without sin." But through the conflict we must follow Christ to the triumph, if we would still be in this matter "without sin," and say, as unreservedly as he did, "O my father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

This conflict, however, is far from necessary to the Christian's experience, as it was to that of the great Sin-bearer when approaching the altar of the world's redemption. Mr. William Wardlaw was a man of deep humility, and of enlightened, warm-hearted piety. Dying at the ripe age of eighty, he was visited by some Christian friends, to whom he discoursed in his usual cheerful manner, and spoke with humble but unfaltering confidence of his hopes for eternity, founded on

the Saviour's merits. One of the party, whose views of divine truth were of a kind which led him not only to indulge in gloomy feeling and anxious forebodings, but even to attach to these a certain religious worth, was somewhat scandalized by the brightness which seemed diffused over the soul of the dying saint; and he could not refrain from endeavouring to recall him to what he considered a more befitting state of mind, "Oh! Mr. Wardlaw," he said, "does it beseem us to pass through the dark valley without a struggle? Remember how it fared with our Master: was not his soul troubled within him, and was not he sorrowful even unto death?" "Ay," exclaimed the dying saint, rising on his couch, "it was even so; and oh! man, it is that very trouble and that very sorrow that make me go so lightly through the valley this day. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.*" *

Mr. Wilberforce often mentioned it as a proof of great wisdom on the part of Bunyan, that while the younger believer, Hopeful, is described in the Pilgrim's Progress as passing easily through the stream of death, a less buoyant hope and a deeper flood are represented as the portion of the aged Christian. "It is the peculiarity," he said, "of the Christian religion that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions." When Luther lost his daughter Madeleine, aged fourteen years, he said to his weeping wife, "Consider, dear Catherine, whither she has gone. She has surely made a happy journey. Children do not dispute. With children all is simple; they die without fear or anguish, without disputes, without the temptations

* Memoirs of his son, Dr. Wardlaw.

which usually beset death, without bodily pain, much as if they went to sleep."

But age and experience are not the only occasions of the difference between Hopeful and Christian. The young have often to pass through conflicts like those of Christian, and the aged are often buoyant and joyous as was Hopeful. We shall give an example of each.

Thomas Ward, a Railway Labourer.

THOMAS WARD was a railway labourer, and was brought to Christ by the instructions of an earnest-minded lady at Beckenham. Soon after his conversion he obtained a situation on the North Western Railway, and one week after entering on its duties his life was endangered by an accident in which one of his arms was wrenched off between an engine and wagons. "Don't you fret for me," said the suffering man in the hospital to Miss Marsh; "that would be the worst of all: and you wouldn't, if you knew how God had been all love to me through the whole of this trouble." "Oh! Thomas," she replied, "you would never say a word that was not quite true, I know. Do you really mean to tell me that you have never for a moment doubted that 'GOD IS LOVE,' even under this terrible blow?" "Never, for one moment. During the six hours and a half before I got up here and got help, I kept thinking what my Saviour bore for me, and that my sufferings were nothing to his—nothing. They couldn't be. *How could I put such a lot into it,* as he could? He was God, as well as man."

Three months after the accident, Thomas Ward was able to visit Beckenham, his spiritual birthplace, but it was only to die there. For a time his peace flowed

like a river. "My Saviour is always near me; he never leaves me," he said in the midst of great suffering. But a few days after his arrival, when friends were watching the rapid ebbing of his life, he said to Miss Marsh in a low voice of agony, "Do not give thanks for me. I am not saved. I am *not* safe in Jesus." "Oh, dear Thomas," she said, "you are not going to doubt your Saviour now, after all he has shown you of his love in this illness?" "But I *do* doubt him," he replied with increasing fervour of anguish. "But you do not doubt that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners?" "No, not that, not that! But if he were *my* Saviour, he would not leave me now." "But he has *not* left you. He will never leave you. This is the devil's last assault upon you; because he knows that you are just escaping from his grasp for ever. But the Saviour's truth is pledged to you, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be.'" "But I am not his servant; if I had been, he would not have forsaken me. I fear I have never rightly come to him." "Well then, come *now*, and you shall find the promise just as true, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

Then, he poured out his soul in prayer—such a prayer as only one can pray who sees the hope of immortal life vanishing from him, and grasps at it in agony, with just enough of hope left to rouse him out of the inaction of despair. "O God, forgive me. O God, save me. O Lord Jesus, pour out thy Spirit upon me. Do not, do not, cast me out, Saviour of sinners. Blessed Saviour, do, *do* save me. Wash me from all my sins in thy blood. It can cleanse

from *all* sins; why not *mine?* Blessed Jesus, do save me."

In this manner he went on for nearly twenty minutes, "pouring out his heart like water." Those who stood by were silent and held their breath as in awe of the presence of an almost unclothed soul, trembling within sight of an open hell and an open heaven, and pleading for life with its God. Towards the close of the prayer, we are told, there came a strange blending of delight in the Redeemer's glory with despair of ever beholding it. "Yes, blessed Jesus, I believe on thee. Thou wast a man upon earth. Thou art a God in heaven, and a man too. Thou canst never die again. I'm so glad of that. Thou wilt be happy for ever in glory with thy Father. But I shall never see thee; never see thee; never see thee, blessed Jesus,—never, never." He then turned to Miss Marsh with a look which pierced her heart. "Where is he? I cannot find him. I shall never find him now. I have lost him—lost him for ever." "Never mind about finding him, dear friend," she replied; "HE HAS FOUND YOU. He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost—to seek and to save you, lost Thomas Ward; and all the devils in hell shall not hinder him from laying you on his shoulders and bringing you home rejoicing." "Now then," she added to those who stood around, "come and plead with your God and his."

They knelt and pleaded with the Saviour, for his own glory's sake, for the sake of his redeemed dying child, and for the sake of those who were witnesses of this terrible effort of the fierce adversary, that the Lord Jesus Christ would show himself to be the great Captain of his salvation, and fight by his side, so that the weary

soldier might be brought off from his last conflict "more than a conqueror through him that loved him." Then pausing for a moment, she turned her eyes towards the dying man, and "beheld his face," as it is written of the first martyr, "as it were the face of an angel." The pulse had ceased to beat except by an occasional flickering. Words were breathed by his lips, yet for a time too faint for human ear to catch. At length they were heard, "Oh! do you see him? I see him now. He is here; he is near—he is with me—he is around me; he will never let me go. How could I ever doubt him? He is the Saviour of sinners. He is *my* Saviour. Jesus is mine, and I am his. His blood has bought me. I never knew what he is till now. Oh! tell them all to come to him, to come NOW. Tell every man you meet. Christ for every man, I say;" and his voice rang through the room, "JESUS CHRIST FOR EVERY MAN." He paused for breath; then gently added, "*My* blessed, blessed Saviour, world without end, amen. Blessed, blessed Jesus." These were his last words; and as the clock struck one on the Sabbath morning, he entered into life eternal, "more than a conqueror."

While young Christians have thus to battle with Satan and the unbelief of their own hearts, ripe and aged Christians have often passed through the waters of death in the enjoyment of unclouded light and peace: *their* battles have already been fought, and Satan has departed from them, not for a season, but for ever. It was so with Dr. Payson, the variety and severity of whose conflicts we have already seen. When compelled by disease to relinquish public labour, he enjoyed a happiness which his heart could

not have conceived before. "If God had told me some time ago," he said, "that he was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world, and then had told me that he should begin by crippling me in all my limbs, and removing me from all my usual sources of enjoyment, I should have thought it a very strange mode of accomplishing his purpose. And yet how is his wisdom manifest even in this! For if you should see a man shut up in a close room, idolizing a set of lamps, and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you would begin by blowing out all his lamps, and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of heaven." On being asked, "Are your views of heaven clearer and brighter than ever before?" he said, "Why, for a few moments I may have had as bright; but formerly my joys were tumultuous: now all is calm and peaceful." "When I read Bunyan's description of the land of Beulah, where the sun shines and the birds sing day and night, I used to doubt whether there was such a place; but now my own experience has convinced me of it; and it infinitely transcends all my previous conceptions." In a letter which he dictated to his sister at this time he dwells on this idea: "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission."

Bright as was Payson's death-bed experience, it is in his holy and useful life that we find the best evidence of his true character. Dr. Dwight replied to some question that was put to him in his last moments, touching his spiritual exercises, "It is not the death but the life to which you must look." If we have witnessed a consistent, godly walk in a professed Christian, we have no right to call in question the genuineness of his piety, even though his death-bed demonstrations may not be what we desire; and, on the other hand, we may well tremble for the issue of an apparently careless life in a professed Christian, however the death-scene may seem gilded with glory.

The outward circumstances of the Christian's death "avail nothing." The Rev. J. Carter, a Puritan minister, came unexpectedly on one occasion behind a Christian of his acquaintance, who was occupied in his business as a tanner. He gave him a pleasant tap on the shoulder, whereupon the good man started, looked behind him, and said, "Sir, I am ashamed that you should find me thus employed." Mr. Carter replied, "Let Christ, when he cometh, find me so doing." "What," said the good man, "doing thus?" "Yes," said Mr. Carter, "faithfully performing the duties of my calling."

Whatever varieties may be found in the dying experience of Christians, there is a singular unity in one point—the ground of hope. Not the toils of philanthropy, not the virtues of private life, were the ground of Wilberforce's confidence in the prospect of eternity. "I have nothing whatever to urge," he

said, "but the poor publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'" "How little," said Lady Huntingdon, "could anything of mine give a moment's rest to a departing soul! So much sin and self mixing with the best; and always so short of what we owe." "I confess," she remarked to a friend, "I have no hope but that which inspired the dying malefactor at the side of my Lord, and I must be saved in the same way—as freely, as fully, or not at all." "Madam, I cordially join you," her friend answered, "and feel with you, that though our lives may be devoted to the work of Jesus, and our deaths the consequence of the service, it is not to these sacrifices we should look for comfort in a dying hour." She replied, "No, verily;" and, enlarging on the idea of the mixture of infirmity and corruption which tarnishes all our best-meant services, she added, "that a sinner could only rest satisfactorily on one foundation, and would find nothing in the best works of his best day, that he could dare produce before God for its own sake—sufficiently blessed and secure if he could but cry, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner; and let me be found accepted in the Beloved, and complete in him.'" "Jesus Christ is my All in all," said Charles Simeon. "Do you see any sting here?" he said to those who surrounded his dying bed. "No, indeed," they answered, "it is all taken away." "Does not this prove that my principles were not founded on fancies or enthusiasm, but that there is a reality in them? And I find them sufficient to support me in death." "Oh! I am naked," said the holy Hewitson; "I am utterly naked—nothing, nothing but the righteousness of Emmanuel. The sins of my ministry, how appalling to me now! The blood of souls! But the

blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "I have no hope," said Lord Teignmouth, "but in Christ Jesus, in his sacrifice, in his blood, in his righteousness." "As for myself," said the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, "nothing can be more weak or more worthless than I am. I can only rest myself on the merit of the Lord Jesus." Again, "Lord, I cannot have rejoicing in myself, for all is most defective and defiled. Yet such thou receivest. Oh, wonderful grace!" And when death was very near at hand he said, "I have no confidence in any goodness or merit of my own; I place my whole trust in the Lord Jesus Christ." To his medical man he said, "I find all my principles confirmed by my last hours; I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he supports me now." Sir Edward Parry said, the day before his death, "I can only say that in Christ and him crucified is all my salvation and all my desire." "Yes," said Lady Parry, "that is as he would have it, that all but himself should be as nothing." "Oh," he replied, "nothing, nothing—I sweep it all away: he is all my salvation and all my desire." The Rev. Legh Richmond, when dying, said to a friend, "It is only by coming to Christ as a little child, and as for the first time, that I can get peace." "Brother, brother," he said to another friend, "I cast myself on the sovereign, free, and full grace of God in the covenant by Christ Jesus." "I find no satisfaction in looking at anything I have done," said Dr. Payson on his deathbed. "I want to leave all this behind—it is nothing—and fly to Christ to be clothed in his righteousness." Again, "I have done nothing myself. I have not fought, but Christ has fought for me; I have not run, but Christ has carried me; I have not

worked, but Christ has wrought in me: Christ has done all."

These Christians, and others who, like them, have thus avowed their exclusive trust in the Saviour's righteousness, have not been unconscious of the holiness inwrought in them by the Spirit of God. "There is a confidence frequently adverted to in the apostolical writings," says Dr. Wardlaw, "which arises from the fruits of faith, as the evidence to the believer of his personal interest in Christ and his salvation. And this kind of confidence is perfectly compatible with the spirit of entire self-renunciation, and simple-hearted and exclusive reliance on the mercy of God through the cross. . . . . The two feelings are inseparable; and they are proportionate to each other. In proportion as we are under the influence of a deep sense of unworthiness and a spirit of self-renunciation, and feel ourselves debtors to free mercy through atoning blood, will be the strength of our gratitude to the God of salvation for his abundant grace; and then, by a beautiful reciprocation, in proportion to the strength of grateful love, will be the fruits of practical service, and the confidence inspired by these as the evidence of interest in Christ." "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing"—the final possession of the heavenly inheritance—"is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore"—because we have been so "wrought" or prepared—"we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord."* "Herein," says John, "is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in

*2 Corinthians v. 5—7.

this world." * The apostle's sentiment seems to be, that the evidence and manifestation of love to God is to be sought in resemblance to him; and that the more perfect the resemblance, the more perfect is the manifestation of love. "This is the perfection of love, that as he is, so are we in this world; so that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." The primary confidence of a sinner before God can never rest on any other foundation than the righteousness of his Son. But the believer's consciousness of growing conformity to his image imparts to him that "boldness" which naturally springs from the assurance that he has passed from death unto life.

It is on this principle we interpret the dying words of General Havelock. When, after four days' illness, brought on by laborious anxieties and privations too great for mortal flesh to bear, he lay on his death-bed, and said to his friend and companion in arms, Sir James Outram, "For more than forty years I have so ruled my life that, when death came, I might face it without fear," it was in no spirit of pride or of self-confidence. "To think the truth concerning oneself," was John Wesley's definition of "humility." Caleb did not boast when, as he asked of Joshua the inheritance which Moses had promised him five-and-forty years before, he said of himself, "I wholly followed the Lord my God;" he only thought and spoke "the truth" of himself. And so was it with the Christian warrior when about to

> "Rest from the twofold strife—
> The battle-field of India and the battle-field of life."

He had "wholly followed the Lord." He had so ruled his life, amidst all its temptations, and in refe-

*1 John iv. 17.

rence to all its duties, that when death came he might die without fear. It was by the grace of Christ his Saviour he had done so; and the grace which had sanctified his life cheered his death. "I am not in the least afraid. To die is gain."

But it is instructive to observe how seldom even the holiest Christians refer in their dying hours to the work of the Spirit of God in them, and how emphatic are their references to the work of Christ for them. They know that any dependence on the work of Christ which is unaccompanied with the relinquishment of sin, and with newness of life, is vain. But they are so deeply conscious of the imperfections which cleave even to their new life that they turn away from the contemplation of it to the contemplation of the perfect work of the Saviour, and "cling" to *it* with the tenacity with which they clung to it when their first convictions of sin drove them to him for refuge. This explains how those who find Christ only on a death-bed often die as happily as those who have served him for many years. They are both resting on the same foundation, and the *immediate* source of peace and joy to both is the same—the all-sufficiency of the atoning sacrifice. The new-born convert and the experienced Christian exult alike in Him who is their righteousness and strength, and through his mercy receive an abundant entrance into his kingdom. What difference there may be between them *there*, the fruit of their difference in discipline and progress on earth, it is not given to mortals to know. "The day will declare it."

In following the history of the Christian's work and conflict, we have exhibited the Lord Jesus as his exemplar; not neglecting, at the same time, to remind ourselves and our readers of other relations in which he stands to us. And these other relations are not secondary, but primary. We shall not be able to walk in his steps as a man, if we do not confide in his sacrifice as the Mediator between God and men. We shall not work as he worked, or fight as he fought, if we do not draw from him, the Ever-living, the life that inspires and the strength that performs.

True as it is that no man liveth to himself, and that no man dieth to himself, it is equally true that every man both lives and dies *by* himself,—the subject of an experience and the bearer of a responsibility which no other shares. The soul is most solitary in its bitterest sorrows and sweetest joys, in its hardest toils and severest conflicts. Its solitude is not lost in the most completely mingled society. Were we in a position to gaze downwards on a forest in the midst of a storm, we should see only an undistinguishable mass of green leaf and waving branch. But every tree, every branch, every leaf, has still its separate existence, and will live or die by itself. If we look at a large assembly in a moment of fervid excitement, they are of one judgment, they have one aim; one strong passion has brought them into one place; and now they are listening to words which burn into their inmost souls, and fuse them into one mass of living, boiling sentiment. The atmosphere they breathe is not more one than seems to be the soul that actuates them. But every member of this mass stands alone; his soul is in most perfect solitude when in most perfect society —a solitude of responsibility and destiny, which

nothing can impair, and on which nothing can intrude.

This is one of the most solemn facts of our present existence. Feeble and frail as we are, every man is held personally answerable for the deeds done in the body, and is thus raised to an awful relationship to God. And, personally responsible, he passes in personal solitude through the most important conditions and crises of his life. In the throes of the second birth, in after-conflict with the world, the devil, and the flesh, in spiritual joy and in spiritual sorrow, in the hour of death and in the hour of judgment, *he is inwardly alone.*

Especially is this solitude felt to be real in the hour of the last mortal strife. Crowds may surround us and urge their friendly help; but our spirits still remain alone. Parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, friend and friend, in vain they cling to each other; each will die alone and be judged alone.

One might dwell on this theme till he has covered his spirit with a pall of blackness and despair. I look around this wide universe and see beings and things innumerable, the friendly and the hostile, but yet I am alone, and in my *aloneness* must I suffer and enjoy, and do and pass through, all that is most momentous and awful on this and on the other side of the grave. The thought is more than I can bear, and I feel myself sinking in deep waters, till through the dark cloud above me I hear a voice saying, "*I am with thee.*" Like John in the Apocalypse, I turn to see the voice that speaketh, and lo! it is His who assumed my nature that he might have a brother's sympathy with my spirit; his who was tempted of

the devil in the wilderness, and overcame and sinned not; his who wept at the grave of Lazarus and said, "I am the resurrection and the life;" his who died for my sins on Calvary to make my peace with God; his who, now ascended on high, liveth for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of the invisible world. And when I recognize his glorious form breathing love, and invested with power, I gather boldness to say, "Into thine hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me." And now in all my conscious solitude let the Lord Jesus be with my spirit, and I need no companionship, no help besides. I will fight the good fight of faith, *he being with my spirit.* I will overcome the world, the devil, and the flesh, *he being with my spirit.* I will approach the throne with unfaltering footstep, *he being with my spirit.* And the chiefest joy of eternity will be that he whom I have followed "in the regeneration," whose mercy has pardoned, whose grace has sanctified, whose friendship has cheered, whose example has guided, through earthly toil and conflict, IS STILL WITH MY SPIRIT.

"The heir of heaven, henceforth I fear not death;
In Christ I live; in Christ I draw the breath
Of the true life. Let, then, earth, sea, and sky,
Make war against me! On my heart I show
Their mighty Maker's seal. In vain *they* try
To end my life that can but end its woe.
Is that a deathbed where a Christian lies?
Yes, but not his—'tis Death himself there dies."

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